THE DISCIPLES

AN INTERPRETATION

By B. A. Abbott

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THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

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AN INTERPRETATION

By B. A. Abbott

Editor of "The Christian-Evangelist," Author "The Life of Chapman S. Lucas," Sometime Pastor of the Christian Church at Charlottesville, Va.; Harlem Avenue Christian Church, Baltimore, Maryland; and Union Avenue Christian Church, Saint Louis, Missouri

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Prefatory

NO one can write an authoritative book for the Disciples of Christ. It is not necessary and it is not desirable. With them the ultimate Christian authority is Jesus Christ and the New Testament reveals his mind. "We have the mind of Christ."

But books of interpretation and information are needed by a people from time to time, in order to hold them to their visions, and make them able to grapple with the problems of a civilization perpetually growing larger and more complex. This book keeps in mind the relation of the Disciples to the changed methods and temper of the times, and to the new thought world into which we have come.

Following a long period of work as pastor in the east and central west, it has been my pleasure during the past seven years to visit both State and National conventions of Disciples of Christ in many sections of our country. I have talked with people in all ranks of church life, and have looked at the Brotherhood whole and from many angles.

In every way my esteem for the consecration and ability of the ministers and for the personnel and prophetic outlook of the churches has grown greater, and my conviction of the truth and the timeliness of the proposal of the Disciples has been strengthened and vitalized.

After much reflection upon what I have seen and heard in these farflung visits, and after practically rereading the history and ideals of the Disciples as set forth in the writings of the Campbells, the autobiography of Barton W. Stone, the five great debates of Alexander Campbell and the histories of the movement by B. B. Tyler, J. H. Garrison and W. T. Moore, I have written this interpretation. It is intended for the general reader, for the use of pastors in training new converts, for classes in Christian leadership, and for Sunday schools and colleges wishing a brief course in the history of the Disciples.

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The work has been done in hours snatched from pressing duties in the office and from the precious quiet evenings at home; in the environment of strange hotels; and in the Pullman on long and often lonely transcontinental trips while seeking to do my bit for the Brotherhood.

This interpretation is dedicated to my comrades in a great movement which will continue to be both a revival and a crusade until the goal of Jesus Christ has been realized in the strength of a united church and the glory of a redeemed world.

Special thanks are given Jesse M. Bader, Superintendent of Evangelism, on account of whose suggestion and enthusiasm I undertook and continued the work; to Frederick D. Kershner, Professor of Christian Doctrine in Drake University; to R. Graham Frank, General Secretary of the International Convention of Disciples of Christ, and to my wife, Helen Ireland Abbott, all of whom read the manuscript and made valuable suggestions; to Miss Jessie Woodley, my secretary, who labored patiently and often over hours to get the work ready for the compositors; and to W. P. Shelton, whose co-operation as General Manager of the Christian Board of Publication made possible the issue of this volume.

If this book shall make even a small contribution to the church which is to me the very gate of heaven—the church which would in the name of the "Master of all good workmen" render a service to all the churches, and above all to the Church of which all are but visible segments, I shall be repaid a thousandfold for my labor.

B. A. ABBOTT.

Jan. 26, 1924.

NOTE TO SECOND EDITION

The first edition of this book was received with rather surprising but very gratifying welcome. Proofs are abundant that it has been useful. For this the author is profoundly grateful. There are a few but necessary changes in the present edition. "Backgrounds and Horizons," preceding the chapters, contain the substance of the last chapter of the first issue with added material. This is not intended to analyze the chapter following, but to give the universal view of the special material in the chapter. It is hoped that these will give the book a more general interest and service.

The Author.

Sept. 1, 1926.

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BACKGROUNDS AND HORIZONS

IDEA OF CHURCH HISTORY.

The mirror of apostles, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, fathers, reformers and saints of every tongue and age in their deeds, doctrines, words, sufferings and achievements for Jesus Christ.

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Organization and government.
Vision and worship.

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Reveals the method of his work.
Shows the reality and perpetuity of the spiritual life.
Demonstrates the indestructibility of Christ's words.

CHAPTER I

HISTORY OF THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

TRUE Church history records the works of God through his people, chosen because they were willing to be chosen as his instruments. Jesus founded the Church and it went well until it yielded to the snare of institutionalism and Roman Catholic absolutism which held sway for a thousand years. This power was broken and Protestantism was launched by the work of Martin Luther. The building ideas in Protestantism were justification by faith, freedom of conscience, the right to read the Scriptures and to be guided by them without overhead authority. But the ideal has not yet been fully wrought out. Creeds were written and men required to conform to them. Protestantism was in danger of becoming an arrested development. To protest against the divisions and the threatened crystallization of Protestantism arose the Disciples of Christ, as outlined in this chapter. In their democracy and acceptance of the Bible, with all the implications, the Disciples stand on the ultimate Protestant grounds. They have carried out and practiced the true Protestant ideas.

How the Movement Arose

In the new republic that had been established through the Declaration of Independence and the Revolutionary War civilization was born anew. It was inevitable that the Church, yea even Christianity itself, should feel the effects of this. The unsuspected sweep of the desire for liberty soon showed itself in the churches. A new life had been awakened. Men were going back to the fundamental rights of the human race. Thomas Jefferson had carried the case of humanity back to the judgment bar of mankind and pleaded for the establishment of an order in which men could enjoy the inalienable rights of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" according to the sovereignty of the people themselves. The task of reconstructing the old church in the new land was a gigantic one. The pioneers of the Disciples made appeal to the New Testament and the leaders were filled with enthusiasm when they found simple forms, organization, versatile powers, adaptable methods, and the divine fire that would exactly suit the new order that had already commenced to recreate the life of the world.

A pattern was shown them in the mount and it was a theocratic democracy—free, united, animated by the Holy Spirit,—exactly the church of which they were dreaming. So far was the New

Testament ahead of the plans and modes of government—so far is it still ahead and leading.

Thomas and Alexander Campbell in West Virginia, Barton W. Stone, David Purviance, with other men of great intellect and spirituality in Kentucky; Walter Scott in Ohio, Dr. Chester Bullard in Virginia and able Christians in various parts of the country, without knowledge of the views and actions of each other, lifted up their voices against division in the body of Christ, caused by unwarranted assumptions of authority by ecclesiastical institutions, and by the substitution of *interpretations* of the New Testament for the New Testament itself.

The earliest large movement in this direction began in 1804 under the leadership of Barton W. Stone, a Presbyterian minister in Kentucky. It grew out of the Caneridge revival, near Paris, Kentucky, which was one of the most remarkable spiritual manifestations in the history of Christianity. Out of it in whole or in part, gushed three new streams of church life in America—the Christian Connection, the Cumberland Presbyterian, and the fiery evangelism communicated to the Disciples by Barton W. Stone and his churches.

In August, 1809, Thomas Campbell, of Washington, Pa., formed "The Christian Association of Washington," and in September of the same year issued a remarkable Declaration and Address, deploring the tendencies of party spirit and hurt-

ful divisions among Christians, and the ecclesiastical enforcement of the human interpretations of God's Word in place of the pure doctrine of Christ.

The principles of this address were cordially endorsed by Alexander Campbell, his son, and in the following year (1810) he began publicly to urge them upon the churches. It was hoped, and sincere and strenuous effort was made, to avoid setting up a new body of people but the temper of Christians at the time compelled such a course.

The first separate organization as a church was formed May 4, 1811, at Brush Run, Pennsylvania, with twenty-nine members; in 1813 this church united with the Redstone Baptist Association and ten years after with the Mahoning association of the same people. In 1823 Mr. Campbell began publishing *The Christian Baptist,* and his teachings soon attracted wide attention. Opposition was aroused and his views were denounced as heterodox, but large numbers accepted them. Many new churches came into existence under his labors and those of Walter Scott, and the Baptists began to declare non-fellowship with the Campbells and their associates. Thus the Disciples were driven to form themselves into a separate body, that they might follow the truth as God gave them to see it. Until this day they regret separate existence but they do not apologize for it.

Their life as an independent, modern body may be dated from 1827 when they became known as Disciples of Christ. It was plainly a renaissance of the apostolic ideal, organization, method and emphasis. Establishing a separate group of Christians made the plea of the Campbells for Christian union more difficult, but did not nullify it. It is consistent and logical to preach the value and truthfulness of a doctrine even though the practice of it may lag far behind. Ideals must be held up and urged even if the future should be long in realizing them.

Christians and Disciples Unite

In 1832 Barton W. Stone, together with a majority of those who held his views, and Alexander Campbell and his followers, began to be united into one body. A meeting had been called for the purpose; "Raccoon" John Smith and B. W. Stone were the appointed speakers representing the Disciples and the Christians respectively. There was a public, dramatic, and touching overt act on Saturday, January 1, 1832, at Lexington, Kentucky, which may be regarded as the actual formal step that initiated the union of Disciples and Christians. It is so important historically and so suggestive practically and doctrinally that we copy the following description of it from the Life of John Smith. Closing his address Smith said:

For several years past I have stood pledged to meet the religious world, or any part of it, on the ancient Gospel and order of things, as presented in the words of the Book. This is the foundation on which Christians once stood, and on it they can, and ought to, stand again. From this I cannot depart to meet any man, or set of men, in the wide world. While, for the sake of peace and Christian union, I have long since waived the public maintenance of any speculation I may hold, yet not one gospel fact, commandment, or promise, will I surrender for the world!

Let us, then, my brethren, be no longer Campbellites, or Stoncites, New Lights, or Old Lights or any kind of lights, but let us all come to the Bible and to the Bible alone, as the only Book in the world that can give us all the light we need.

He sat down, and Stone arose, his heart glowing with love, and every pulse bounding with hope.

I will not attempt to introduce any new topic, but will say a few things on the same subjects already presented by my beloved brother.

After speaking for some time in a strain of irresistible tenderness, he said:

Controversies of the Church sufficiently prove that Christians never can be one in their speculations upon those mysterious and sublime subjects, which, while they interest the Christian philosopher, can not edify the Church. After we had given up all creeds and taken the Bible, and the Bible alone, as our rule of faith and practice, we met with so much opposition, that, by force of circumstances, I was led to deliver some speculative discourses upon these subjects. But I never preached a sermon of that kind that really feasted my heart; I al-

ways felt a barrenness of soul afterwards. I perfectly accord with Brother Smith that those speculations should never be taken into the pulpit; but that when compelled to speak of them at all, we should do so in the words of inspiration.

I have not one objection to the ground laid down by him as the true scriptural basis of union among the people of God; and I am willing to give him, now and here, my hand.

He turned as he spoke, and offered to Smith a hand trembling with rapture and brotherly love, and it was grasped by a hand full of the honest pledges of fellowship, and the union was virtually accomplished!

It was now proposed that all who felt willing to unite on these principles, should express their willingness by giving one another the hand of fellowship; and elders and teachers hastened forward, and joined their hands and hearts in joyful accord. A song arose, and brethren and sisters, with many tearful greetings, ratified and confirmed the union. On Lord's day, they broke the loaf together, and in that sweet and solemn communion, again pledged to each other their brotherly love.

This union of the Christians and the Disciples was not a surrender of the one party to the other; it was an agreement of such as already recognized and loved each other as brethren, to work and to worship together. It was a union of those who held alike the necessity of implicit faith and of

unreserved obedience; who accepted the facts, commands, and promises, as set forth in the Bible; who conceded the right of private judgment to all; who taught that opinions were no part of the faith delivered to the saints; and who were now pledged that no speculative matters should ever be debated to the disturbance of the peace and harmony of the Church, but that when compelled to speak on controverted subjects, they would adopt the style and language of the Holy Spirit. (*History of the Disciples of Christ,* by Moore, pp. 208-209.)

A considerable number of the "Christian" Churches refused to enter this union and they grew into the body known as "the Christian Church" but not an organization of the Disciples held back.

For the next thirty-five years Mr. Campbell was the foremost figure in the united movement. The body has grown to be large and influential and is called "Christian" and "Disciple." The group headed by Stone was known as "Christian" by his choice, while Campbell preferred the name "Disciple." The church is registered in the census of the United States as Disciples of Christ.

Conditions and methods were little stressed at first but the authoritative standard was prominent from the beginning. That authority was the Bible. Rapid growth soon forced the consideration of methods, and thorough study made it apparent

that the only way to union was by the restoration of the apostolic church as delineated in the New Testament. The apostles preached Christ as the object of faith. Having thus a clear vision of their goal, method, and guide, the Disciples faced their duty and undertook their part in the spread of Christianity.

The modern Disciples of Christ, now more than a century old, have never lost their passion for Christian union nor abandoned the belief that it will be brought about by the leadership of the Holy Spirit and the guidance of the New Testament exerted through the Church of Jesus Christ. Never in their history have the Disciples failed to co-operate with any true Christian union movement. Alexander Campbell heartily supported both the "American and Foreign Bible Society" and the "American Bible Society" by personal gifts and by exhorting all the churches to do likewise. He donated the royalties from his debate with Purcell to these societies equally. In 1838 it amounted to $800. The proceeds from each copy was six cents. Mr. Campbell was also a member of the "American Bible Union" whose object was to procure and circulate the most faithful versions of the Scriptures. The Disciples have always joined other Christians heartily in all co-operative movements. When the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor arose the churches immedi-

ately entered into it and became an important force in its development. They have always been active in union Sunday school work. From its foundation, they have co-operated with the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America and have furnished some of its ablest leaders. They were active in the Interchurch World Movement and bore their share of the burden when it collapsed. Thus many times they have proved their faith by their works.

The Principles Followed

In order to escape the party spirit which has broken the peace and reduced the power of Christ's Church, the Disciples sought to stand on common, universal ground. Without this there can be no real union. They propose the following principles of life and union to their brethren, in addition to the great fundamentals manifestly held by all Christians:

1. A universal Church. The pioneers said, and their successors today declare, that "the Church of Christ is intentionally and constitutionally one, and all divisions which break this unity are contrary to the will of God."

2. They propose a universal book as the only rule of faith and practice, the only authoritative and complete repository of all that is necessary to faith, practice and expectation in this world and in that which is to come. That book is the Bible,

the only book which can support claims of universality and of special revelation.

3. The universal confession of faith, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. (Matt. 16:15, 16.)

4. The universal, Scriptural names, believer, Christian, disciple, saint, brethren and the other great words that describe the people of God.

5. The universally accepted ordinances, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, in form, administration and purpose as they were given and practiced by Christ and his apostles.

6. The universal life, such as that set forth by Christ and his apostles in the New Testament.

7. The universal aim, which is to establish the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven.

Pioneers

Probably the eight most prominent men who gave the temper, the direction, and the pace to the movement known as the Disciples of Christ during its first period can be pointed out. Four of these were from the Disciples with Mr. Campbell as leader and four from the Christians with Mr. Stone as leader. Of the former group Thomas Campbell "contributed most to the union sentiment which was prominent at the beginning; Alexander Campbell contributed most to the constructive features, both theological and ecclesiastical; Walter Scott contributed most to the evangelistic

spirit and work, while Dr. Robert Richardson contributed most to the devotional and spiritual side of the movement." These have been called the "Big Four" among the modern founders of the Disciples. The Christian Church, or "New Lights," gave the following leaders: Barton W. Stone, the pioneer and editor; Samuel Rogers, the crusader and evangelist; his brother, John Rogers, the interpreter and biographer; and John A. Gano, the indefatigable evangelist. With such a galaxy of masters it is little wonder that such a cause soon became prominent in the new country. The "Christians" brought into the movement a new evangelistic element, while the "Reformers" brought into it an earnest study of the Scriptures and an equally earnest plea for conformity to all that the Scriptures enjoined.

Agencies and Methods

During the early period the foundations of the future work of the Disciples were firmly laid by these men and others. They instituted agencies of co-operation, of training, and of mutual leadership, without which no church can live and grow. The chief agencies in building the brotherhood have been from the first the printing press, the local congregation, the college and the association of the local churches through representative conventions and missionary societies. The country was sown with tracts and papers, chief among

which were *The Christian Baptist* and *The Millennial Harbinger,* founded and edited by Mr. Campbell. Barton W. Stone and John T. Johnson edited and published *The Christian Messenger.* These journals were the beginnings of the Christian Church press.

From time to time many periodicals saw the light, but most of them soon perished for lack of support or because they had served their purposes. Among distinguished weeklies which came in the second era were *The American Christian Review,* edited by Benjamin Franklin, the *Christian Standard,* by Isaac Errett and *The Christian-Evangelist,* by J. H. Garrison and B. W. Johnson. The two last papers are still being published. Two quarterlies existed for a while. There are several excellent state papers and parish papers almost innumerable. *World Call,* a monthly missionary magazine, is published by the United Christian Missionary Society. It is the continuation of five small monthlies. With the *Christian Standard* and *The Christian-Evangelist* have arisen the two publishing houses which supply the brotherhood with books and literature necessary for the conservation and propagation of their plea and for the equipment of their Bible schools.

Evangelism has been a prominent method of work among the Disciples from the beginning. Men of flaming hearts and fiery tongues went

everywhere preaching the gospel. The world has never seen a more powerful, brilliant, dramatic, or effective evangelism than the pioneering of these early Disciples in the wonderful new West where the seeds of the nation were being planted in the soil of earth's greatest continent.

At first practically all ministers were evangelists. They went about through the new country on foot, and on horseback. Often they went two by two, after the apostolic pattern. Sometimes one of the evangelists was a singer. Not their least contribution was that of teaching the churches the ministry of sacred song.

Many preachers and evangelists were developed from the business walks of life some of whom became mighty in word and exhortation. To this is to be attributed in good part the rapid growth of the Disciples.

For a while evangelism fell into disfavor among the Disciples—and then came a disquieting falling off in additions. About the time the World War broke out, the churches were suffering a loss annually. In 1918 the net loss was 57,000 and in 1919, it was 5,608. This was in part caused by the World War which diverted attention from evangelism and called many of the pastors and evangelists to France, England, Belgium and Italy as chaplains and Y. M. C. A. secretaries. The church leaders became aroused

over the situation. *The Christian-Evangelist* took it up editorially and also in a symposium in which a number of the State secretaries spoke out favoring the restoration of evangelism of the New Testament. At the International Convention of 1920 in St. Louis the Committee on Resolutions recommended the launching of a five year evangelistic campaign. The idea was adopted and Jesse M. Bader was selected as the superintendent of it. The results fully justified the hopes of the convention. The churches quickly overcame their losses and at least a million people were converted to Christ and more than 200,000 were added to the churches. There were over 90,000 additions in 1925.

The evangelism of this campaign was devoid of "high pressure" features. It was made effective by good preaching and sincere personal work. The New Testament was the source of doctrines and largely the example of methods. It is believed that at least 500,000 people read the Acts through, a chapter a day, during February of 1926.

Bethany College was founded in 1841 to disseminate Christian education. It was part of a comprehensive scheme worked out by Mr. Campbell. The plan included a system of education for the home, the community and the church. It really proposed a new undergirding of civilization. Mr.

Campbell's idea was to make the Bible fundamental as a text-book. Bethany is said to have been the first college in the world to introduce the English Bible into its curriculum.

Along with formative agencies and methods already noted we are to mention Mr. Campbell's debates. It is doubtful whether there is any better means of promoting the truth or educating the public than by open, high toned and properly ethicized discussion. These debates may have created the impression that the Disciples are a people fond of strife; but their history will show, that while they have never allowed the community to stagnate mentally in religious things, no people have been on better terms or dwelt with their neighbors in more cordial, sincere, or brotherly relationship than the Disciples have with theirs. In fact, long pondering upon their plea, upon the Savior's prayer, and upon the sorrowful results of division, has awakened in them a passion and a genius for friendship with all God's people.

Mr. Campbell engaged in five oral debates covering the period, 1827-1842. The first was with Dr. John Walker, Presbyterian minister; the second, with Dr. William McCalla, Presbyterian; the third, with Mr. Robert Owen, of Scotland, atheist and socialist; the fourth, with Archbishop Purcell, a Roman Catholic; and finally with Dr. Nathan L. Rice, a Presbyterian minister of Lexington, Ky.

Henry Clay presided at the debate with Mr. Rice. The last three debates are amongst the ablest and most informing discussions in the annals of Christianity. They not only attracted universal attention, but commanded the profoundest study of leading minds of the times. They helped to purify the ideals, and to eliminate much of the unnecessary and the harmful from the religious thinking of Christians in all the churches. No student of American Christianity can really understand the development of religion and church life in the Mississippi Valley and throughout the West without reading at least Campbell's debates with Mr. Owen, Archbishop Purcell, and Dr. N. L. Rice.

The discussion with Mr. Owen was probably the chief influence in saving "The Golden West" from atheism and from social and communistic experiments which would have wrecked its civilization for several generations and made it permanently very undesirably different from what it is today.

Organization and Achievement

Almost immediately following the important era of debates came the era of organization. The Disciples are congregational in polity. They have no central overhead ecclesiastical body that legislates for the local churches, either doctrinally, ecclesiastically, or in methods, plans or programs of work. But it early became apparent that no single congregation acting independently could

carry out the terms of the Great Commission to preach, teach, baptize, and plant Christianity in all the world. The genius of the movement required missionary enterprise. Having taken Christ as Lord and Master, his command to preach the gospel in all the world became especially urgent, profoundly imperative. Hence, the missionary societies came. By them the Disciples have been more fully educated in the world vision of Christ and given an objective and an opportunity as wide and deep as the needs of the human race.

Besides, so much momentum had been generated by their vigorous evangelism that it was necessary to have organization to keep it all from ending in chaos. A great religious body with the dynamic of passion and the momentum of activity becomes a terrible menace to itself and Christendom unless made orderly and directed by wise organization. So the ablest and most far-seeing men planned a missionary organization in 1849. Alexander Campbell was its first president. It was known as the American Christian Missionary Society. The first foreign missionary sent out by the society was Dr. James T. Barclay, of Virginia, who went to the city of Jerusalem. Other societies came later, the chief ones being the Christian Woman's Board of Missions in 1874; the Foreign Christian Missionary Society in 1875; the National Benevolent As-

sociation in 1886; the Church Extension Board in 1888, the Board of Ministerial Relief in 1895; the Board of Temperance and Social Welfare in 1907; the Board of Education in 1915; and in 1910 the Association for the Promotion of Christian Unity.

During the years 1874-1913 the churches had been instructed and educated in missionary ideals, chiefly under the leadership of A. McLean and F. M. Rains, until the enkindled passion and vision came to expression in the Men and Millions Movement. This was a most remarkable crusade and challenged the Disciples with the mission of the Master as they had never before been challenged.

It created a new era of enlargement and enthusiasm in the Church. It grew out of the suggestion of Alexander Paul, a missionary to China, while on a sick bed, that $200,000 be raised to meet the great new opportunity in that country. It was like a vision and he spoke of it again and again until through prayer and conference with such leaders as F. M. Rains, A. McLean, A. E. Cory, W. F. Holt, Mrs. M. E. Harlan, Grant K. Lewis, R. A. Long and others it was decided to raise $6,300,000 for the general missionary, ministerial, educational and benevolent work of the Church. R. A. Long subscribed and paid $1,100,000 toward this fund, which was perhaps the largest single sum ever given in such a way. This movement resulted not only in securing millions of dollars

but more than 8,000 young people enlisted for life service of some specific kind and a new system of finance was adopted by most of the churches. Its influence has been altogether spiritual and new streams of life and power are manifest everywhere as a result of it.

In response to an overwhelming demand the American Christian Missionary Society, the Foreign Christian Missionary Society, the Christian Woman's Board of Missions and the National Benevolent Association were merged into one organization, which is known today as the United Christian Missionary Society. This kind of expansion and arrangement shows the methods of adaptation to the growing life and outreach of the Church. These organizations are general, but the different states have their own missionary associations. Some states are districted and each district carefully organized.

The policy of general voluntary organization has proved practicable and effective, though it has caused much discussion and even at times threatened serious divisions among the churches. There is always more danger of schism than of heresy and the former probably does more harm than the latter. How to work together will always be a problem for people who think and who are personally responsible to God for their conduct.

Under the stimulation of co-operative efforts the

strong have helped to bear the burdens of the weak and development has been, for the most part, symmetrical and spiritual. The local churches have been strengthened and at the same time delivered from hurtful provincialism. They have been kept informed about the needy places of the world and have been able to cope with the growing life of the nation.

In October, 1909, a centennial convention was held in Pittsburgh, Pa., in celebration of the utterance of the Declaration and Address by Thomas Campbell and others at Washington, Pa., in September, 1809. Disciples from all over the world were in attendance. Some had travelled around the earth to be present. Probably 50,000 people came together in this celebration. A communion service was held in Forbes Field and at least 30,000 Christians partook of the Lord's Supper together. This is believed to have been the largest communion service ever held in the history of Christianity. There have been few if any, other visible gatherings for any purpose that equalled it in numbers. This celebration was greatly fruitful. The Disciples became more conscious of their power and importance as a movement in the Church with this visualization and it may be said to have caused a new era of enthusiasm and expansion and of discussion. The discussion has often caused uneasi-

ness but the more thoughtful regard it as the growing pains necessarily incident to enlargement.

In the course of the movement two serious storm centers have developed. One was instrumental music in public worship, the other was the organization of special societies for evangelistic, missionary, benevolent and educational purposes. The music question agitated the churches greatly for a time. It was a survival and echo of the conflict in the Scotch churches over the use of any kind of instrument in the churches and of singing anything but the psalms. The majority of the Disciples have decided that the organ is not sinful though many congregations refuse to "fellowship" with churches using the organ. But experience has proved that music does not despiritualize people and the whole question is now treated as one indifferent to morals, religion and church order. The debate over the societies is still kept up, but in the meantime the vast majority of the people are working co-operatively through them. They are treated as expediences but time has demonstrated their value.

Colleges and Education

At first the Disciples were unusually active in education. Beginning with Bethany College, which has had a very distinguished career, individual Disciples and groups of men and women have established colleges in Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio,

Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, Washington, California, Texas, Oklahoma, Georgia, New York and in fact in almost every state in the Union, for the service of the Church. Many of these colleges have gone out of existence because, being purely individual enterprises, there was no money to keep them going after their founders had passed away. The educational interests of the Disciples languished for a considerable period. Even Bethany College was almost lost on account of lack of support. But recently a new zeal for education has been kindled throughout the brotherhood. Much money is being given by wealthy business men to strengthen and enlarge the colleges. The statement has been made recently that more money has been given to support and endow colleges of the Disciples during the last ten years than during all the previous history of the movement. This is the beginning of a new educational era. It is full of promise for the future of the Disciples. They now have (1923) about thirty colleges in the United States and one in Australia. Some of them are senior colleges and most of them have brighter prospects for usefulness than ever before.

One of the most important educational developments was the establishment of Bible chairs in connection with some of the State universities. The idea of placing theological seminaries next to the universities was first proposed in the

United States by Thomas Jefferson in connection with the University of Virginia. But it remained for the Christian Woman's Board of Missions, one of the former organizations of the Disciples of Christ, to put this unique but very practical and practicable idea into active operation. Accordingly chairs have been established at the Universities of Michigan, Virginia, Kansas, Texas, and Bible Colleges at the Universities of Indiana and Missouri. The results have been satisfactory. The experimental stage is past. Probably other chairs of the kind will be established in the future.

Recapitulation and Outlook

There are churches of this faith and order in every state in the Union, excepting Nevada and New Hampshire, and in the following countries: Africa, England, Scotland, Canada, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the West Indies, South America, Australasia, China, Japan, India, Mexico, Hawaii, the Philippine Islands and Tibet.

Thus, briefly, came into existence and grew this religious body which is a new world development of Christianity from the sowing of Christ and his apostles. It is able to flourish in all countries because it is an organism rather than an organization. It is the most completely democratic of any religious body and takes its stand firmly upon the original Protestant principle enunciated by Chillingworth: "The Bible, the whole Bible, and noth-

ing but the Bible, is the religion of Protestants." The movement is inclusive and not exclusive and its passion is to deliver the Church of Christ from those proscriptions, suspicions, and ambitions which have marred its beauty, disturbed its peace, despoiled its spirituality, and limited its power in the earth.

The Disciples gladly rejoice in the thought that others as well as themselves are Christians. They simply desire to be Christians only, and their churches aim to be only churches of Christ. With no creed but Christ, no book but the Bible, they have no aim but to serve. Religious conditions in the world and amongst the Disciples cause them to believe that their views will meet with even greater favor in the future than in the past, and their growth will be more rapid and solid. The passing of a century shows no abatement of energy or diminution of evangelistic fervor, and their principles are commanding wider and more favorable consideration than ever before.

PROPHETIC VISION OF THE DISCIPLES.

"Christianity was, and grew because it was, a great fraternity."—Hatch.

The unity of all the groups of Christendom on Jesus Christ, according to the pattern of the apostolic churches, with the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice.

NEW TESTAMENT IDEA OF CHRISTIAN UNION.

It is inward—that is the unity of the spirit. John 17: 20-26; Eph. 4:1-6; Col. 3:12-17; 1 John 1.

It is outward—that is, it is union expressing unity. Eph. 4:1-6.

(a) A state of peace.
(b) Harmony in doctrine and ideals.
(c) Fellowship and love in attitude.
(d) Co-operation in practical good works.

MUST BE REALIZED IN EACH CONGREGATION.

Matt. 18:15-35; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 1:10-13; 11:18; 12:12-31; Mark 3:23-27; Luke 11:14-19.

POWER OF THE UNITED CHURCH.

"The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matt. 18:18-20; John 17:20; Acts 12.

HOW IT IS TO BE EFFECTED.

By human influences and energies.

(a) Acquaintance.
(b) Association.
(c) Prayer.
(d) Liberty.

By divine influences and energies.

(a) Providence of God.
(b) Leadership of leaders by the Holy Spirit.
(c) The love of Jesus Christ which will draw all men together.
(d) Acceptance of the New Testament as the only rule of faith and practice.

CHAPTER II

THE PROPOSAL OF THE DISCIPLES

THE seed of the Reformation of the 16th Century was sown in the heart of Martin Luther when, as a youth of eighteen years, he saw for the first time a complete copy of the Bible. The seed was quickened in his study of the Bible which he found chained in the convent. The seed was further quickened as he was ascending Pilate's Staircase on his knees on his first visit to Rome when he heard a voice of thunder crying from the bottom of his heart, "The just shall live by faith." That was the true conception of the Christian life. The Reformation became a reality launched upon the field of history when he nailed the ninety-five theses to the door of Wittenberg Church, and when he appeared as the defender of the faith and of the supremacy of the conscience of the individual at the Diet of Worms. There and then modern democracy was born and the way opened to recover the true *idea of the church.*

But it was a long way to full realization and we have not yet reached the goal. The centuries since have been full of religious debate. With freedom of discussion, the 17th and 18th centuries witnessed many strange ideas. Atheism and anarchy

were rife. It was an age of exploration and new nations were struggling for life. Men were necessarily tenacious of their views and hostile to one another. The 18th century of the Church dawned with the sectarian, ecclesiastical and theological mind. Foundations were being laid in America and every sect was urging its claims that it might control the new land. Strife was terrible and bitter. Into such a condition in 1809 Thomas and Alexander Campbell set up the plea for the union of God's people. The text, "Come out of her, my people," was being preached everywhere as the cure of the ills of Christianity. Even the wonderful preaching and work of Barton W. Stone, beginning in 1804, was at first based upon the view that reformation by "coming out" was the right way to a pure, New Testament Christianity.

In the midst of this the Campbells discovered in the New Testament that the way to the perfection and power of the Church was by union, instead of by division or by the process of "coming out." To be sure union had been advocated before by spiritually minded ministers and by ecclesiastics. But with the former it was simply a fine wish of the heart and with the latter a purely ecclesiastical measure. The basis proposed was the creeds and the method that of the absorption of one body by another. The Campbells proposed faith in Jesus Christ as the doctrinal basis of

union, the New Testament as the only authoritative interpretation of the mind of Christ, and the life, the practices, the spirit and the fruits of the apostolic Church as the norm of methods and ideals. This was the discovery of the Campbells and they made it their plan and proposal to the Christian world, and they spent their lives with passion and arduous work to bring it to the attention of Christendom. This was one of the greatest creative religious visions of recent times tending to restore the apostolic Church, to increase spirituality, and to establish brotherhood in the world. It is to be classed with the vision of the spiritual value of the Bible followed by John Wycliffe; the freedom of the faith by Martin Luther; the sovereignty of God by John Calvin; the purpose of God in heathen missions by William Carey; and the necessity of the personal experience of God by John Wesley.

The Proposal of the Disciples

It is their proposal to the 200 or so different religious bodies which shelter under the name "Christian." It implies that whatever the necessity for analysis and division in the past the time has now come for synthesis and union. The principles underlying the proposal of the Disciples are that the Church is one, that it is spiritual, that it is the body of Christ, that it is a brotherhood and that division is therefore against the will of God

and the very genius of Christianity. Reconciliation and atonement must not only prevail between God and man, and man and man, but also between church and church.

The proposal of the Disciples is their plea for the union of all God's people on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. It is a call to God's people to come out of their separate and isolated existence and become one in Jesus Christ with his doctrine, work, word, hope and worship as guides in the way of life. It is, therefore, a plea of large friendships and all-inclusive fellowships. It is the plea to all God's people to take the Word of God as their only rule of faith and practice.

Reason of the Proposal

1. The evils of sectarianism.

Thomas Campbell, who first made the proposal, was a Presbyterian minister from Ireland. When he settled in Western Pennsylvania he found bitter divisions among the churches where he worked. How strong were the feelings of antagonism between people of different churches in his day may be judged from an incident. On one occasion Alexander Campbell, who with his father was promoting the new Christian Union movement, was caught in a severe storm and one of his neighbors, a member of another church, refused to let him come into the house to shelter from the storm because he was

adjudged a heretic. That was sectarianism gone mad, but all sectarianism has such possibilities. The first aim of the proposal was to destroy such a spirit.

2. It is urged by the words of Christ and His Apostles.

The Campbells were impelled by the study of the New Testament to seek for the union of God's people. No one who studies the words of Christ and his apostles can for a moment harbor the thought that division is right. Schism is a sin. It is the rending of the body of Christ. Christ's prayer for the oneness of his disciples, recorded in the gospel of John, chapter 17, became the great, all-impelling dynamic of this new movement, and it has been both its approach and the appeal to Christendom ever since.

Paul traces the roots of division back to the unregenerate heart and shows how it limits and shrivels those who become parties to it. Division is a sin of the carnal nature. This causes the unholy passion for pre-eminence. "By that sin angels fell." The creeds which were written to hold together the people so lately come out of ecclesiasticism became dogmatic and static and so divisive. The plea of the Disciples is a plea for more room, for larger love and for practical, co-operative alignment with all God's people.

3. It is urged by the spiritual value of union.

(a) The full and combined strength of all the churches is demanded to combat the evils of the time and to make progress in a world like this. There is not a Christian group in existence, there never has been, and there never will be one which is equal to the moral battles or the spiritual leadership of mankind alone. The enemy is too great to be met with divided forces.

(b) Union is essential to the full realization of the Christian character. We need the hymns of all writers to express our views and to waken us to fulness of worship. It is wrong to attempt to make churches according to type. No one should specialize in Christian virtues. As the apple needs substance, form, color, flavor, ripeness, and beauty —all that earth, air, sun, darkness, dew and rain can give to make it perfect—so each one needs all the influence and revelation of Jesus Christ that may come out of all the churches. The greatest evil of sectarianism is that it *excludes* so much. It is exclusive instead of inclusive. The re-united Church will be the fountain of all good things, the homing place of all genuine saints. We want Matthew's hope, Mark's power, Luke's humanity, John's supernaturalism in the Church. We want Peter's eloquence, Paul's logic and literary power, James' practical wisdom, Stephen's consuming fire, and John's visions and revelations in the Church.

It will take the true saints of all the churches to make the true Church. Christian union will bring all the riches of faith and glory of character together in each church and in each character. We cannot be made perfect without one another. "And these all having had witness borne to them through their faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better things concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect" (Heb. 11:39, 40). Nature is perfected by man and man is perfected by fellowship.

(c) Christian union is essential to the fullest understanding of Jesus Christ. A broken mirror cannot reflect an object without distortion. A divided church can neither get the complete vision of Christ nor give his full image to the world. Sectarianism has a distorted view of Christ and of man. Through it the world can neither see God nor man as they are. A broken church gives broken views of truth and of God.

(d) Finally, it is only the united Church that will be able to convert the world. Christian union is the shortest route to this spiritual achievement. Christian missions must come by the home field for Christian union must come there first. Jesus prayed: "That they may all be one; * * * * that the world may believe that Thou didst send me."

The Nature of the Union Proposed

The organic union of different churches seems not to have been thought of at first by the pioneers. The notion was rather a co-operative association, a body somewhat analogous to the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ, which is a unity movement through co-operation, with this difference that "The Christian Association" of Thomas Campbell and his associates was composed of individuals out of all the churches rather than being a co-operative movement of the churches themselves. The influence and spirituality of such an association would quickly extend throughout the different bodies as has the Christian Endeavor Society in our times. The full purpose and scope of this association was written out by Thomas Campbell and it has come down to us in a large tract called the "Declaration and Address."

Dr. F. D. Kershner has recently written an able and fresh interpretation of this important Christian union document.

The Christian union proposed is not of the making of man. It must be of the mind and heart before it becomes organization and environment. Any union that is mechanical and not vital cannot last long and while it lasts its unreality will result in the starvation of the heart.

1. The idea of union is given by Jesus Christ himself. He prayed for it amid the deepening

shadows of Gethsemane (John 17:20-24.). The unity described there is so profound that the human mind can scarcely follow it. It is metaphysical. It sounds the depths of personality. It calls for oneness in the midst of separateness. It is deeper than the dream of mystic or philosopher. It is more ecstatic than the rapture of seer or devotee. Yet on its outer rim we can see that it is (a) oneness of purpose, (b) oneness of will, (c) oneness of work, (d) and that its bond and seal is love—"as Thou lovedst me," (John 17:23). From these things we understand that the very *essence* of Christian union or unity—one and both—is love. According to Jesus Christ when Christians love one another they are united. And we know from observation that Christians of different groups may and do love one another and that they work together to fulfill the purpose of Christ. In the view of it in Christ's prayer it is not an ecclesiastical fixation that can be established by vote and canon but it is a relationship, a reality, that must be wrought out by prayer and tied together by the strongest force in the universe, love.

2. St. Paul analyzes Christian union and points out its elements. This will be found in Ephesians 4:4-6. (a) "There is one body"—hence a *visible* union, all the members of the body working together. They cannot exist unless they so work.

(b) "One hope"—which must be the hope of eternal redemption. In a large way it may be regarded as unity of desire and expectation in what we call idealism. (c) "One Spirit"—the Holy Spirit given to all Christians, hence making them move by one common impulse. (d) "One Lord," who is Jesus Christ. Christians must be one in accepting him as the supreme authority in religion. The real test of a Christian and *therefore* of churches also, is whether they accept *Jesus as Lord.* The crucial, practical doctrine of Christianity is the lordship of Christ. "Whatsoever you do in word or deed do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." (e) "One faith," no doubt the faith embodied in the Good Confession made by Peter and commended by Christ and later witnessed by Jesus himself before Pontius Pilate: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matt. 16:15; 1 Timothy 6:13). This faith was first lived by the apostles and then written down in the New Testament by inspiration as the rule of life, the incentive to practice. The "faith" is a body of doctrine; it is the attitude of the soul; it is the sum of one's beliefs and trust. One in faith—polarized about Jesus Christ and God. (f) "One Baptism"—that practiced by apostles, that observed by Jesus Christ himself. There are not many baptisms—there are not many forms of baptism. Christian union demands that we all prac-

tice the same thing here. This is not a matter of indifference and men are not permitted to *change it at will.* Citizenship is free but no citizen is entitled to change the stars and stripes to suit himself, nor to alter the oath of allegiance nor the ritual of expressing his citizenship. Baptism connotes a profound inward change, but it also has its outward symbol. And Christians must use the same symbol for the sake of unity. Let no one tamper with the great seal of the kingdom. Christ appointed baptism and we must all practice the same *substance and form* of it. And the *New Testament* baptism is immersion. (g) "One God and Father of all"—the transcendent God, who rules over all; the immanent God, who acts through all; the incarnate God, who dwells in all.

This is a wonderful list of spiritual gifts we may enjoy, of spiritual glories to which we may attain. And it is remarkable, that nearly all Christians agree on all these points—agree on them by believing and practicing, excepting on the "one body" and the "one baptism." The Disciples propose that both of these points be settled by the records of the New Testament studied naturally according to the laws of language and interpreted without prejudice by prayer and by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. (See John 16:13.)

3. All this shows that Christian union must be thought of as a great spiritual consummation, as

an active expression of the new order of society in Jesus Christ. It was viewed in this light by Alexander Campbell who wrote:

> I never cherished a scheme so Utopian as the scheme of union which floats in the minds of some professors. Men unite not as masses, but as individuals. We come together one by one, not in nations nor organized masses. Parties, like nations, indeed, may hold an armistice—they may agree on a cessation of hostilities—they may even propose a reciprocity of kind offices—they may open their respective houses, pulpits, and communion tables to each other—they may form a confederation of communities to a certain extent; and still reserve certain peculiarities for further discussion. But as voluntary associations farther they cannot go. Yet this would be but an ecclesiastic, not a Christian union; and only a partial ecclesiastic union. Christian union is a more intimate, spiritual, celestial sort of thing, into which we can enter only in our individual capacity and upon our own individual responsibility. It presupposes closer acquaintance, stronger personal confidence, more spiritual attachment, a real oneness of spirit, a full coalescence of souls in the joint participation of the same Holy Spirit.

While a satisfactory definition of Christian union is impossible at this time it may, nevertheless, be of service to attempt it. The following is offered: A united Church would be one of which Christ is the confessed and accepted head; in which every member would be sensitively responsive to his will; where each would have liberty for the rightful use of his own personality—Godward, manward, selfward; in which faith, hope and love awakened in the heart by the Spirit

through the Word would be the binding forces; and where all the members acted in such harmony that the sum total of their influence would be fully expressed for the promotion of the cause of Christ in the world and for spiritual suggestion, culture and comfort of the members themselves.

Such a union would be inward, real, vital, sympathetic and creative—like the life that animates the body, like the life of God in the soul of man—instead of being mechanical, arbitrary, and so largely dominated by the human element, as at present. Outwardly there might be seams and even sections in organization, like the States of the union, but it would be an organism as well as an organization and the unity would be even a kind of mystical identity which would as occasion arose, express its life as the deep, rising, irresistible tide of American patriotism faced the World War.

The Way to Union

1. It will come by the actual acceptance of God's word. As Thomas Campbell wrote in 1809:

> This desirable rest, however, we utterly despair either to find for ourselves, or to be able to recommend to our brethren, by continuing amid the diversity and rancor of party contentions, the veering uncertainty and clashings of human opinions: nor, indeed, can we reasonably expect to find it anywhere but in Christ and his simple Word, which is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Our desire, therefore, for ourselves and our brethren would be, that, rejecting human opinions and the inventions of

men as of any authority, or as having any place in the Church of God, we might forever cease from further contention about such things; returning to and holding fast by the original standard; taking the divine word alone for our rule; The Holy Spirit for our teacher and guide, to lead us into all truth; and Christ alone, as exhibited in the word, for our salvation; that, by so doing, we may be at peace among ourselves, follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

2. No doubt Christian union will be largely worked out through co-operation. There must be actual association before there can be genuine union. Personal fellowship and appreciation must be practiced. Co-operation in good works of every kind will help wear away the sharp corners, overcome the strangeness and awkwardness of contact, and produce the Christian love and the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Not far away then will be real Christian union. This course would save Christians from the attempt "to sectarianize the truth and dismember Jesus Christ."

3. Union will come by the influence of the Holy Spirit. We shall be led of the Spirit when we earnestly study and pray to be so led. We may say reverently, that that is God's active part today in bringing his people into the rich and satisfying experience of Christian union.

4. Taking the example of the Master as guide surely the plainest pathway to Christian union is prayer. Any union effected without that will be but a mechanical human arrangement which will

make the case worse rather than better. Church statesmanship is to be used but prayer must be the largest element in it. Prayer melts away pride and self-will and enlightens the mind. It lifts the heart into the experience of God and suffuses it with his purposes. Christian union will come by way of the closet of praying Christians.

The Progress of the Proposal

1. The progress of Christian union in the world has been very marked and very encouraging. While there are more sects than there were a hundred years ago there is not nearly so much sectarianism. The churches love each other and their antipathies are not so strong nor so bitter. It may be that we are much nearer the goal than we dream. The effort to achieve Christian union has had its hindrances and drawbacks, perhaps at times the plea itself has been too much specialized but still it has marched on.

2. Once the Disciples were alone in preaching Christian union but practically the whole Christian world is preaching it now. The desire for Christian union has reached such a stage that it is doubtful whether any other subject is as thoroughly and widely discussed in Christendom. This is because Christian union is, after all, not the task of any one group of Christian people alone. It belongs to all. Furthermore it is Christ's plea; yea, it is his prayer.

3. The plea of the Disciples is also justified by modern world tendencies. The whole trend today is toward united action. Experience both in the Church and in the world demonstrates the necessity of union as a basis for democracy and for progress.

Dr. William Warren Sweet, in his book *Our American Churches* very generousy says:

> The Disciples Church has proved that it is possible to have an effective and united Christian body without a man-made creed. No denomination exceeds the Disciples in their denominational consciousness, yet there are those who insist that a creedless church is a rope of sand. The fact, also, that they have no creedal statements has allowed a large measure of intellectual freedom among them, and they have had, as a result, few if any heresy trials. The Disciples have always set an example for Bible study. Alexander Campbell led the way in advocating the modern view of the Scriptures and placed a different value upon the Old and New Testaments at a time when many church leaders were insisting that every book in the Bible was of equal value. Throughout their one hundred years of history the Disciples have likewise maintained a steady and effective evangelism—a fact that in large measure accounts for their large and aggressive membership. (Page 111.)

The Future of the Proposal

One of the greatest problems of the Disciples is to maintain a separate existence and yet be able to push their proposal for Christian union effectively. Two dangers confront them here—the danger of ineffectiveness and the danger of sectarianism.

1. The first danger is due to the seeming inconsistency of being a separate, aggressive body and

still urging union. Yet it is only by separate existence that they can gain attention. An idea must become incarnate in order to be effective. It is possible, in fact it seems the only way, to form a body for the preaching of a truth to others and at the same time hold the group in such a state of mind and heart that it will accept its own proposition when the hour is ripe for it. This can be done by keeping the eyes on the true goal. An army fights for peace—it is aggressive, destructive, the very opposite of peace. But the moment arrives when everybody is willing to accept peace and then the order to "cease firing" is given. Of course, somebody is conquered, gives in. In the case of Christian union everybody becomes conquered by the love of Christ and all "give in" whole-heartedly to Jesus Christ.

2. The other phase of our problem is to avoid sectarianism in our own hearts. There is a great temptation to this, especially when there is rapid growth and the manifest blessing of God upon the work of our hands. But that very fact should keep us humble. It should keep us in the love of God, which is the source of our love for our fellowman. Conviction that we are right in our views ought to work out a broad and generous feeling toward others. Besides this, no one is ever in the right when he is sectarian in spirit. Truth is always perverted when attempt is

made consciously or unconsciously to sectarianize it. We can avoid the steel-trap of sectarianism by sincerely "practicing the presence of God," by using truly "the means of grace" given for the education of the soul. In addition to this we must keep our hearts set on the great issue of Christian union and earnestly pray that Christ will raise up many others to make this plea, and we must be ready to move out with all the rest when the way is plain.

3. There are several union propositions before the world now. There is the Roman Catholic, which means absorption of all Christians into their body. This is impossible, unthinkable. There is the Anglican or Episcopal, which means the acceptance of their orders, their ministry and the historic episcopate. There is the proposition known as the Philadelphia Plan, which contemplates a central overhead authority with the recognition of the common practice of all the churches of today; and there is that of our own Church, which is union on confession of faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of the Living God and the acceptance of the New Testament as the only authoritative interpretation of that confession and of the principles of worship and organization.

4. The proposal has not been outgrown. It has not been discounted by any changes in theology, church or society. It has not been altered in any

respect by the astounding growth of science and invention. We must still preach it and live it.

The plea of the Disciples will finally prevail if it is Christ's way. And it must be Christ's way,—it is certainly in accord with Christ's way, for he prayed long and earnestly somewhere between the Upper Room and Gethsemane "for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one." Our stubborn sectarianism, our fond denominationalism, our errors and our pride cannot hold out against that great, blood-crimsoned, intercessory prayer of the Master who loved the Church and gave himself up for it.

WHAT CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE IS.

The orderly and comprehensive arrangement and interpretation of the facts of the religion of Christ for the practical ends of the Christian life.

NECESSITY FOR CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

What science is to nature doctrine is to religion.
For satisfaction of heart and the guidance of life.
To show the truth of religion.
To make the teaching of Christianity possible.

SOURCES OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

The divine revelation in the Old and New Testaments.
The person, words and works of Christ.
Preaching and practice of the Apostles.
The sacraments—baptism and the Lord's Supper.
Christian experience tested by the New Testament.

OBLIGATION OF LOYALTY TO THE DOCTRINE.

A Scripture command: Contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. Jude 3.
A divine trust: Guard that which is committed unto thee. 1 Timothy 6:20.
A spiritual necessity: To keep it pure, that it may be the seed of the Kingdom.
An age-long opportunity; In order to transmit the faith to future generations.
A fellowship service: For the sake of Church unity.
A transforming influence: In order to make a civilization according to the Divine Mind.

AFFIRMATIONS OF THE DISCIPLES.

The full content of the New Testament.
The good confession. Matt. 16:16.
The great surrender. Acts 2:38.
The supreme authority. Matt. 28:18; Acts 2:36; 10:26; Rom. 10:12; 1 Cor. 16:23.
The inner light. John 14:15-17, 26; 16:13-14.
The social obligation. Matt. 23:8; John 13:12-14; 1 John 3:13-15.
The personal practice. Matt. 5:43-48; 25:41-46; Rom. 12; Phil. 4:8-9.
The unchangeable guide. John 6:63, 64; 16:13-15; 2 Tim. 3:14-17.
The eternal hope. John 14:1-7; Rom. 8:18-24; 1 John 3:1-3.

CHAPTER III

DOCTRINE OF THE DISCIPLES

THE Disciples teach that God is our Father in heaven, according to the reverent and loving words of Christ; that Jesus Christ is his Son and the Savior of sinners; that the Holy Spirit is the comforter, revealer and interpreter of God's word and God's way, given to all who obey God and ask for him; that man in his natural state does not know God and must be born again in order to enter the Kingdom of heaven; and that man will live forever and be rewarded according to the deeds done in the body. They believe that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. They believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross to save sinners. They believe in the Church and in the Kingdom of God.

A Doctrine Without a Creed

Yet the Disciples have no written authoritative statement of doctrine. Why? It is not because they do not believe most of the statements in the creeds, but because they regard the dogmatic creeds as having been divisive and as continuing so; and that whatever may have been their influence in the

past they have served their day. When the New Testament was not accessible to the people, and they needed some kind of interpretation to aid them in understanding duty and divine things, the creed rendered a service. Five things may be said against the use of authoritative, written creeds today.

First, they are divisive. History proves this and the use of them today will likewise demonstrate it.

Second, they are not comprehensive enough. They leave too many things unsaid and thus they fall short of the demands and developments of the Christian life.

Third, they need perpetual revision, which is equal to saying they are not mobile, adaptable, nor fundamental. They have a tendency to substitute partial truths for full truths. If they were fundamental, useful and permanent, they would fit without any revision into the growing life and changing times, just as gravity, air, light and heat automatically adapt themselves to any physical conditions that can arise.

Fourth, they work against unprejudiced thought and hinder freedom of utterance. These have always been priceless privileges cherished by the Disciples who hold most strenuously to the right of private opinion and the sacredness and duty of honest, clear thinking, as far as one is equal to it.

Fifth, when the New Testament became widely circulated and accessible to all, it was not necessary that there should be any other written statements setting forth Christianity in an authoritative way. Instead of belief in a creed the Disciples urge belief in Jesus Christ. Christianity is not embodied in a proposition, it lives in a person.

Sufficiency of the New Testament

The Disciples have always held to the New Testament as a sufficiently simple and clear statement of the contents of a Christian's privilege and duty.

It was a saying of one of the early interpreters of the Disciples, that if the creed contains more than the Bible it contains too much, if it contains less than the Bible it contains too little, if it contains exactly what the Bible contains it is unnecessary for we have the Bible itself. If one reads, digests, and believes what is contained in the New Testament he will have both the doctrine and the spirit of Christianity. St. John wrote at the end of his gospel: "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name." (John 20:30, 31).

The Bible is to be thought of as the written standard of authority. Disciples are accustomed to say, "Where the Scriptures speak we speak and

where the Scriptures are silent we are silent." No doubt there are many things in the Bible which must be explained but this is better done by the living voice than by the dogmatic utterance of any church council or the stereotyped statement of any creed. The rights and duties of all men and especially of Christians are clearly set out in the New Testament.

The gospel of Christ contains the theology of Christians. It is a living, vital message full of fire and life-giving force. As far as it is possible to analyze a living force the gospel was analyzed by Walter Scott who said it consists of facts to be believed, commands to be obeyed and promises to be enjoyed.

These ideas show us that the Disciples are not a theological people. They have always resisted making a theology out of the gospel or an ecclesiasticism out of the brotherhood. The management of their lives is not so much by line upon line and precept upon precept as it is by the inspiration of the truth, and the presence of the Master. They seek to move by the direct word of God and the leadings of the Holy Spirit. They regard Christianity as a way of life rather than a system of philosophy, or a scheme of science. As a way of life it is set forth by the words and example of Christ and his apostles, which are the final, full and satisfactory utterances of all things necessary to be

preached, believed, and practiced in order to the fulfillment of earth's duties and the enjoyment of eternal blessedness.

Faith in a Person

The Disciples teach faith in a person rather than belief of a theological proposition. They would give a vital message rather than offer a logical scheme; a living doctrine rather than a mere interesting history.

In a true sense no group of Christians has more persistently preached the essential doctrines of Christianity than have the Disciples. But they have drawn these doctrines directly from the New Testament and connected them with Jesus Christ as their test and center of gravity. The essence of the religious life is to follow him. The end of the religious effort is to reach the goal he has pointed out. The Disciples have no creed but Christ, no book but the Bible, no aim but to serve. Their confession of faith is that of Peter, as he looked into the face of the Master, who was encouraging him to say what was in his heart: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." (Matt. 16:16.) That is the only doctrinal proclamation required of a man who would enter into the Church and it is required of him that he bring his life openly into harmony with Jesus Christ's teaching and example. Does he obey Christ as his Savior? That is enough. That is the beginning

of the new life in public. It exalts Christ as the Lord of life and the hope of all aims, and dreams, and visions. The true theology is Jesus Christ himself. He said: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." That was the Master's statement of truth. The fatherly side of God, the secret and standard of character, and redeeming love are all incarnate in Christ. He was God manifest in the flesh. He is all and in all for all true doctrine.

Doctrine and Apologetics

Perhaps a word should be said here relative to the controversies that have been in the world from the beginning and that are disturbing the peace of many today.

First, as to naturalism and miracles, the Disciples believe in miracles; in a supernatural religion; in a divine Christ; and in a living, loving, ever present God.

Regarding revelation and rationalism, they believe in a Bible inspired of God; that the world can only be saved by the death and sufferings of Christ; in a life nourished by the teachings of the New Testament; and by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. They have freely used reason to deal with the facts of Christianity. They believe God must be loved with the mind, as well as with the heart, and that Christianity is a reasonable religion. Every one must give a reason for the faith that

is in him. Faith itself is the higher reason and it is based upon the supernatural.

They have regarded such questions as election, predestination and the old controversies about free-will and foreordination matters of opinion.

The consensus of views would no doubt relegate evolution to the realm of science and philosophy and, so long as men see it as the way God works, the majority would accept it in some form, though some would reject it entirely. But neither the acceptance nor rejection of it would impair one's standing as a Christian or as a good church member.

These things are but saying that the Disciples have avoided mere speculative thought except as a personal matter, that they have discerned strictly between matters of opinion and matters of faith. Thus the many controversies that have agitated others have scarcely touched them. Such questions as premillennialism or postmillennialism have never broken their ranks nor created much discussion nor disturbance. The facts of the second coming of Christ, the future life with its rewards and punishments, are preached and believed and life is controlled accordingly. No mere theory is ever made a test of fellowship or of the integrity of the religious life.

This produces some conservatism and desirable

homogeneity while allowing freedom of discussion and therefore steady and genuine progress.

Nature of Christianity

The views of the Disciples on the nature of Christianity may be stated, without authority, but simply as an interpretation, as follows:

Christianity is the life created by the influence of Jesus Christ working in the individuals and society of the human race. Its essence is spirit, its fruit is life, its purpose is to redeem man from sin and to grow him into the measure of the stature of fulness in Christ Jesus. Christianity is expressed in the realm of history and human experience in five aspects:

1. Christianity is doctrinal. Therefore it has a book.

In this form it is definite revelation. It is the deposit of the eternal in literature by the Spirit of God through the mind, speech, pen and action of human beings as teaching, history, precept and suggestion. Its supreme and authoritative statement is in the New Testament. We say the New Testament, because all that is permanent and universal in the Old Testament has been brought over into the New Testament and expressed in a more spiritual form through the life of Christ. Christianity is, and always will be, the religion of a book as well as the religion of the Spirit.

2. Christianity is spiritual. (John 4:23, 24.)

It therefore must have both ritual and prayer. For this expression of it we have (a) baptism; (b) the Lord's Supper; and (c) what is generally called "the order of public worship." The latter is a perpetual but varying and adaptable form, and means that the feelings, sentiments, purposes and aspirations of the soul can be organized in a way that will increase their depth in experience and their power in social application. The deepest things in the soul are set out, visualized, made facts, in the ordinances which are unchangeable and in the order of the services which is variable according to conditions and desires. The order of the services, the expressional form of worship, is man's free part in ritual.

The rites of baptism and the Lord's Supper are Christ's fixed power in the soul's confessional.

The action of the soul in these forms is social, sacramental, experimental, rational and mystical. These ordinances harmonize the unrestrained, free-flowing love that forever lies at the heart of the gospel and the unbendable, inflexible law that inheres like iron in the moral order. They leave the action of the human will free but make blessed results certain.

These formal and ritual aspects of the gospel must be maintained as well as the other phases of Christianity. In the ordinances the human spirit and the divine are acting in harmony to the great

end of the purification and redemption of man's soul.

3. Christianity is institutional. This is seen in the Church and the subsidiary bodies that grow out of its creative life. The Church at its highest and best is the social organ of the Holy Spirit.

It purifies the individual and society, therefore it is sacramental.

It maintains and inspires preaching, therefore it is the agent of the living Word.

It creates, fosters and directs fellowship, therefore it is social.

It teaches the living truth as ideal ethic and authority, therefore it is a rational, character-building energy.

It kindles and directs the spirit of worship, therefore it is a mystical influence.

It inspires and directs good works in the world, therefore it is a beneficent, social organism.

It cultivates the heart-life of humanity, therefore it is the spring of kindness, charity, sentiment and love.

It rallies forces and fights the evils of this world, therefore it is the power-house of reformations.

It buries the dead with the ritual of faith and hope, therefore it is the apostle of immortality.

In it membership is perpetual, for time and eternity, therefore it becomes the assembly and Church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven.

Could there be Christianity at all without the Church? Can men be brotherly without the brooding spirit of a brotherhood?

4. Christianity is ethical. The Disciples have always laid great stress upon good works not as a means of salvation for the individual but rather as the expression of the life that dwells in him. As naturally as the tree blossoms and bears fruit because it is rooted in the earth, so naturally will a Christian perform good deeds because his life is rooted in Jesus Christ and because he has the wonderful experience of the life of God in his own soul.

5. The supreme expression of Christianity is Jesus Christ himself and next to him it is to be seen in living men and women who are like him. Christ relives his life in his people. They were created unto good works. God reveals himself, his works and his acts in this world, at least partly, through human personality. The heavenly treasure is in earthen vessels.

6. All these expressions of Christianity co-operate to produce the same end. They all mean something. The power of Christianity is weakened, its beauty marred, its fulness prevented by leaving out any of the phases, doctrine, worship, ritual, institution, or ethic. If we leave out the doctrinal we prevent men from loving God with the mind; if the ritual and ordinance, we impair the

heart qualities of religion; and if we neglect the Church as an organization we weaken the power that promotes Christianity, and destroy its sweet and satisfying fellowships. There must be no missing links in the golden chain that binds us to God.

Above all, we must gather into our own personal, spiritual activities every power, privilege, duty, experience and aspect of Christianity. In this way alone can we come to the fulness of character in Christ.

The doctrine of the Disciples is to be interpreted by the work of the Disciples. They have held almost a puritanic view of morals without which profession has seemed to them hypocrisy. The real Christian is the hope of Christianity. Each conversion is a heart-beat from the throne. It profits a man nothing to have the profession without the deed, the form without the power, the semblance without the reality. This practical view of the Christian life has made the Disciples an exceedingly active people in all good reforms, in law enforcement, in evangelism and religious education, as well as driving them to root their faith deeper in the eternal heart.

The Disciples and Mysticism

The Disciples are by no means merely a pragmatic people. They believe in the perpetual presence and indwelling of Christ, of the Holy Spirit and of God. They declare against the legalistic and

literalistic aspects of the Christian life and believe that prayer is real. As the child can approach and understand the father on earth so the Christian can speak to his Father who is in heaven. As the child may ask for and receive bread from its parents so the child of God may ask for and receive the Holy Spirit.

God's beauty, his love, his reality, his revelation may be expressed through human life. In him we live and move and have our being. He is near to all that call upon him. Christ is the great companion in sickness, sorrow, life, struggle, temptation and death. The life beyond is a larger and more wonderful room in the Father's house of many mansions. Every man will have his chance to reach this home. This is also part of the faith of the Disciples. Consequently there have been found high types of Christian character and beautiful examples of sainthood among them and they are steadily growing in the sacrificial life and its joy. Doctrine, we hope, is steadily transmuted into life and ever out-blossoming in light and beauty on the Godward side. Their saints are not cloistered and cassocked but they are out in the turmoil of life garbed like other men—crusaders, martyrs and the consecrated whose daily work is divine service—like Dr. Albert L. Shelton who gave his life through his profession and Robert H. Stockton who gave his life through his fortune.

THE BIBLE THE FRUIT OF INSPIRATION.

Inspired words. John 16:13-16; Acts 2:1-4; Heb. 1:1; 2 Tim. 3:16-17.

The record of inspired deeds. Luke 1:1-4.

Inspired to inspire. Coleridge believed the Bible was inspired because it inspired him.

The Bible the greatest stimulus to human reason.

THE BIBLE THE COMPLETE EQUIPMENT.

2 Timothy 3:16-17.

"They (the Scriptures) have poetry for the student; history for the statesman; psalms for the temple; proverbs for the mart. They have appeals, denunciations, arguments, stories of battle, songs of love."—Farrar.

". . . . . every hour
I read you, kills a sin
Or lets a virtue in
To fight against it."

THE BIBLE THE INFALLIBLE LIGHT.

"He who has lost his God can find him again in this book, and he who has never known him is here struck by the breath of the Divine Word."

"Why will people go astray when they have this blessed book to guide them?"—Michael Farady.

References: Psalm 1; Psalm 119; Proverbs 6:23; Matt. 4:4, 5, 7; Phil. 2:14-16; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

THE BIBLE THE WORD OF GOD.

Psalm 68:11; John 17:8; 1 Peter 1:23; 2 Timothy 2:9; Heb. 4:12, 13.

THE BIBLE THE MIRROR OF REVELATION.

The revelation of God. Psalm 103; Isa. 6.

The revelation of God's righteousness. Romans 1:17.

The revelation of the human soul. Heb. 4:12, 13.

The revelation of life and immortality. 2 Timothy 1: 10, 11.

THE ETERNITY OF THE BIBLE.

1 Peter 1:23-25.

"The Bible is a book of eternally effective power."—Goethe.

CHAPTER IV

THE BIBLE AND ITS USE

THE word Bible means book. But it has for centuries referred to a special collection of writings, which the brightest minds and most devout people have considered divinely inspired. This collection of writings was first called the Holy Bible by Chrysostom, the famous Greek preacher. The names found in the book itself are Oracles, Scripture and Covenant. (Rom. 3:1, 2; Heb. 5:12; 1 Peter 4:11; Acts 7:38; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 3:16; Hebrews 8:13.)

What the Bible Is

The Bible consists of two general sections called the Old and the New Testament respectively. The Old Testament contains thirty-nine books, the New Testament twenty-seven. F. Godet compared the Bible to a great temple with sixty-six different rooms, each one of which is filled with divine light. That means that this book is to be thought of as the word of God. It contains literature of every kind and there is universal agreement that even in that respect it is not excelled by writers in any tongue. But these forms of language are only vehicles, for the supreme purpose of the Bible is to reveal God to man as his Father and Friend in order that

man's soul may be saved and his conduct be made righteous. John Watson has very fittingly called the Bible *God's Message to the Human Soul.* The Bible is to be considered a divine revelation.

A brief analysis will aid us in grasping the scope and nature of the Bible from a literary point of view.

The Old Testament is generally distributed into the three great divisions:

I. The law which consists of the first five books;

II. The prophets—including Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the twelve minor prophets; and

III. The writings which have sometimes been called the wisdom literature.

This section includes the three poetical books: Job, Psalms, and Proverbs; in addition, the Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles.

The law-books exhibit the fundamental covenant with its legal sanctions and conditions, whereby Israel was set apart and kept apart for the execution of the divine purpose. The prophets exhibit the unfolding of the purpose in the history, and emphasize the spiritual aspect and abiding conditions of the covenant. And the writings in various tones, reproduce as in the Psalms, the answer of the human soul to God's voice, or, as in Proverbs and Job, the questionings and reasonings of the spirit as it turns its regard inwards upon itself.

The New Testament may be divided as follows:

I. Historical—Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts.

II. Didactic—Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1 and 2 and 3 John and Jude.

III. Prophetical—the book of Revelation.

All of these wonderful productions find their center and draw their light and fire from Jesus Christ our Lord.

The four gospels narrate his life and glorious works on earth. Acts tells how the new life, that came from him through the preaching of the Word and by the gift of the Holy Spirit, passed from Jerusalem to Rome; the epistles set forth the significance of the gospel facts, revealed according to our Lord's promise, John 16:12, 13. The book of Revelation shows the Lamb as King, reveals a prophetic vision of the struggle between right and wrong, and shows how Jesus is to become Victor on earth, together with his Church.—Adapted from *The Concise Bible Dictionary.*

The Origin of the Bible

The Bible was given to man by divine inspiration. That is why it is a revelation of God. Inspiration and revelation are related to each other as life and expression. The life in the tree expresses itself in leaf, flower and fruit. Inspiration is the inbreathing of God by the Holy Spirit. Revelation is the vision or body of doctrine and idea created by inspiration. This revelation comes to us in many forms; in individual lives, in great epochs of history, in providence, in such organizations as the Church, in religious assemblies, but especially in men like the prophets, the apostles, the psalmists and the evangelists, who fully put themselves at the service of God, to be used by him in his special work at whatever cost in labor and suffering.

It would be wide of the mark to enter into detail respecting the nature of inspiration. Let us hold to the fact and accept the word of the divinely in-

spired writer. The author of the letter to the Hebrews says: "Many were the forms and fashions in which God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets, but in these days at the end he has spoken to us by a Son." (Hebrews 1:1, 2. Moffatt.)

Peter bears testimony in like manner. "For it was no fabricated fables that we followed when we reported to you the power and advent of our Lord Jesus Christ; we were admitted to the spectacle of his sovereignty, when he was invested with honour and glory by God the Father and when the following voice was borne to him from the sublime Glory, 'This is my son, the Beloved, in whom I delight.' That voice borne from heaven we heard, we who were beside him on the sacred hill, and thus we have gained fresh confirmation of the prophetic word. Pray attend to that word; it shines like a lamp within a darksome spot, till the day dawns and the day-star rises within your hearts—understanding this, at the outset, that no prophetic scripture allows a man to interpret it by himself; for prophecy never came by human impulse, it was when carried away by the Holy Spirit that the holy men of God spoke." (Moffatt.) 2 Peter 1:16-21.

Paul says unequivocally in 2 Timothy 3:16, "All scripture is inspired by God." (Moffatt.)

The Truth of the Bible

This is established in many ways, logical, practical, experimental and intuitional.

1. Considering the efforts made to destroy it, the neglect it has suffered, the misuse of it, the wresting of its texts, the survival of the Bible proclaims it divine. Even nations have tried to destroy it but it has lived despite such efforts.

2. The second proof of its truth is its unity. It was written by different men of different countries who had no converse with each other. The times of these writings covered about forty centuries. Yet the Bible is a perfect unity in its teachings and ideals. There were many mediums of revelation; there was only one Revealer.

3. Its reasonableness is another evidence of its origin in the divine mind. There is nothing foolish, weak or trivial in its pages and its supreme interest is in the joys and sorrows, in the well-being of men and women. It demands justice and fair-play for all. It may be said to be the book of the poor and weak, as against the tyrannical and selfish. It is a democratic book, it is the people's book. When it has been exclusively the book of the priest, the university and even of the preacher or the Church, it has been misused. It is the people's book, God's word to them in their own tongues, the greatest trust democracy ever held.

4. But most of all we judge of its inspiration

by its results. Coleridge said he believed the Bible to be inspired because it inspired him. It could not produce what was not within itself. Reading the Bible, men will grow better. They will be enlightened. They will be taught the way of life.

We are perpetual witnesses to this miraculous power of the Bible. When obeyed it brings to pass the results predicted by itself. Its fruits are the proofs of its infallibility within the sphere and range set out for itself. The criticisms about verbal, plenary, static and dynamic inspiration are generally of little profit. It is hair-splitting and speculating which tend to destroy the spirit of obedience. Does the Bible accomplish what it claims to be able to accomplish? Millions of converted people answer in the affirmative. Then the Bible must be what it claims to be—the Word of God.

5. The Bible is a good book. It makes those who read it better. It awakens sinners and comforts saints. It is "a light that shines upon the road to lead us to the Lamb." It is fit to have been given by a good God, a loving Father.

Purpose of the Bible

There are two great sources of mistake in using the Bible. One is in failing to divide it rightly and confusedly applying to the saints what belongs to the sinner and to the sinners what belongs to saints. The other mistake is failing to understand the purpose of the Bible. It was in-

tended to be a revelation of God. "In the beginning God,"—these are the first words of the Book. It answers, as no other book possibly can, the question "What and Where is God?" (Psalm 139; Matt. 6:9; John 4:21-24; John 14:7-10.) It is the history of God's dealings with men. As we follow the Bible through all its wonderful pages we are taught the reality and personality of God, of the Holy Spirit and of Jesus Christ.

The Bible is not a book on farming, chemistry, geology, astronomy or on any science, though all these are suggested in it. But it reveals God and how to find him; Jesus Christ and how to obey him. It is a book on how to live here, how to prepare to live forever, how to die and how eventually to see God face to face. St. Paul declared: "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for amendment, and for moral discipline, to make the man of God proficient and equip him for good work of every kind." (2 Timothy 3:16, 17, Moffatt.)

Leading Ideas of the Bible

We can only indicate a few of these, but merely to mention them enriches mind and heart. The Bible shows us the personality and greatness of God. It deals with the origin, experience and destiny of man. It gives us the key to the meaning of personality and its possibilities. It reveals the way to the forgiveness of sins. It is the only re-

liable and reasonable source of knowledge about immortality and life beyond the grave. It teaches us the mystery, the personality and the power of the Holy Spirit. It reveals to man the awfulness of wrongdoing and is perfectly inflexible in the revelation of man's accountability. If he does well he will be rewarded, if he does wrong his sin will find him out. No book so thoroughly and tremendously shows the destruction that follows the wrongdoer and finally overtakes him and brings him to the bar of justice. It points out this world to us as a *Vanity Fair* and teaches us that the things we see are temporal, while the things of the Spirit, which we do not see, are eternal. It gives us the substance of ethics, teaching us that justice, kindness and mercy are the fitting things for man to pursue. It teaches us how to live together happily and is thus the secret of society. It shows us that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life.

Power of the Bible

No other book ever written approaches the Bible in influence and power over the human mind and the human heart. This has been recognized generally by great writers and thinkers.

1. The Bible is a book of education. We find in it the materials that tend to awaken thought, kindle emotion, stir up aspiration and develop character. It builds human personality. No man can read it and remain ignorant. Something of its

own power passes into the spirit of him who dwells upon its quiet, luminous pages. Ruskin declared that he was indebted to the Bible for his style. Daniel Webster was so wedded to its study that he was called "the Bible concordance of the Senate." Webster's love of the Bible was inherited from his mother, and his memory was tenacious. It has been said that the Bible "formed his style as an orator," and the same is true in a large measure of Lincoln and of Gladstone, the great English statesman. These and many more famous men in public life—poets, orators and others—have built their fame upon their familiarity with and their love of the Bible.

2. It contains in an excellent degree the quality of consolation. It was called by the French humanist, Renan, "humanity's book of consolation." No matter through what sorrow one has passed, nor through what he must go, no matter the trial, temptation or hardship, the Bible will give consolation. It does this by the teaching and by examples showing that God never fails man in any trial. It "shines through the gloom and points us to the skies."

3. It converts men from darkness to light. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." We have many instances where men have read the Bible and instantly changed the course of their

lives as a result. Standing examples are Augustine and Martin Luther.

4. It is the secret of great preachers. The Bible is the preacher's source book. When he spends his days and nights over it, he receives the truth to be delivered, and he glows with the spirit, flame and fire that belonged to the apostles. But above all he is brought into communion with God and goes forth with the divine passion urgent in his soul.

5. The Bible has never been exhausted. It is the master-book that grows other books. It contains the germ of newspapers, schools, universities, architecture, oratory, music, law and medicine. Out of it have grown whole libraries. Without it such books as *Pilgrim's Progress* never would have been written. A literary man has found five hundred direct and indirect quotations from the Bible in Shakespeare. It is the inspirer and guide of great men. It is the builder of institutions, and it is the secret of the greatest nations of all history.

How to Study the Bible

Here we will indicate some of the ways in which to go through the Bible. The young Christian should start with the intention of making it his daily companion throughout his whole life. Some books are read once and dismissed, some will be for childhood, some for youth and some for manhood and old age. Most of these the Christian

will outgrow but the Bible is to be a daily companion to him, from the cradle to the grave. It is therefore well to learn how to read it, how to use it, and how to divide it rightly, that it may bring the proper result in the life.

1. The Bible should be read through many times in the order in which we have it. In that way a general outline of it will form in the mind, and its atmosphere and light will linger about the memory of the heart. Many people make it a habit to read the entire Book every year.

2. It is profitable to read all of a book at a sitting and to study each book as a whole till the Bible has been thus gone through.

3. The Bible may be read simply as good reading. As one of America's great men says: "There is no other book so interesting." Just from that standpoint, what orations, for example, surpass those of Moses? What dramatic literature the book of Job? What hymns are as good as the twenty-third Psalm? What poetry is better than the Song of Solomon? What sermons outrank those of Isaiah? And the story of Jesus is matchless from every approach of men or of angels.

4. The Bible may be studied doctrinally. It is its own theology and its own explanation, and one may spend a lifetime formulating the doctrines it suggests.

5. Another way to go through the Bible is by

its great characters. From first to last its interest radiates from great men and women. And no other character-studies ever written are so vivid or striking, so instructive or so completely full of human interest as the personalities in the Bible.

6. It should be read devotionally. One reads for communion with God; to learn the difference between right and wrong; and to educate his own heart with noble purpose and splendid vision. Those who study after this fashion will be surprised to find how much of the Bible is prayer. Like a golden thread, it runs all through the wonderful book. The Bible never loses the sense of dependence upon God, and of God's goodness to man.

7. It can be studied profitably by the different forms of civilization, the different modes of society, and the different countries under which its writers lived and wrote their words immortal.

8. A popular way of studying the Bible is by covenants or dispensations. For example, the dispensation from Adam to Noah, from Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to Moses, from Moses to Christ, who made God's eternal covenant with man, unfolding thus God's purposes in humanity. (Hebrews 13:20.) The covenant is one of the fundamental ideas of the Bible and one of the most suggestive.

9. The Bible may be studied topically; as for

example, the light it throws upon civilization, upon questions of war and peace, and upon the ideas of orthodoxy and heterodoxy, upon character and upon life and death.

10. A valuable way to go through the Bible today would be with reference to the existing conditions in State, Church and Society. It is a book of social service. The prophets of Israel, especially, dealt in a most thorough way with the very questions that are arising now between rich and poor—questions of labor, and property, and money. One is almost surprised when he studies the Bible with that as the guiding principle, to find that the struggle for social justice is so completely and luminously treated.

11. Another fruitful line of study would be the rise and fall of nations. The principles that build and those that break are featured. The Bible contains a complete history of the beginnings, the principles and the nature of freedom. Here we find the substance and inspiration of all such documents as the Magna Charta and the Declaration of Independence. From first to last the Bible stands for equality, brotherhood, and mutual service among men.

12. The institutions of the human race would afford another valuable study course through the Scriptures. The family, the tribe, the court, the

tabernacle, the temple, the synagogue, the school and the Church.

13. We may study the Bible with reference to the Great Beyond. The New Testament has the demonstration and the last word on this, the most important of all man's passions. The 28th Chapter of Matthew, the 14th Chapter of John and the 15th Chapter of 1 Corinthians answer every reasonable question of head and heart about death and the Great Beyond.

14. But the supreme way to study the Bible is to use it as the revelation of the will of God and to have the conscience, the heart, the will and the mind educated to do His will as the whole duty and the whole happiness of man. (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14.)

Supremacy of the Bible

The Bible is the supreme treasure of the human race. It is the literary expression of the mind of God on the subject of man's nature, his needs, his duties, his possibilities and his eternal destiny. It is more to him than all books of science, law, art, statescraft, literature, more even than civilization. It is more because it deals with that which is of supreme value to man—his soul, his conduct, and his eternity. It is more to him because it is an inspired book that inspires. If all the achievements of science and invention—which we regard as being the greatest instruments of man's material welfare—were blotted out the Bible would continue

so to energize, arouse, envision, and give to man the desire to make the most out of himself, and the altruistic passion to make the most out of others, that he would take up again the fascinating and rewarding search for the secrets and the blessings of nature. Where there is an open Bible and freedom of action the long, glorious march of liberty will be continued and schools, churches, states, nations and great and good men will be made to lead the peoples on. The heart to work will be kept beating with enthusiasm and the dark experiences of life will not crush men. Life will steadily grow into greater wonder and majesty because the feet of humanity will be guided in the path that grows brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

As we launch away on the great adventure, by which we fare forth beyond sun, moon, and stars, we shall go out unafraid and conscious of the Great Presence if we have the Bible in our hands.

When Sir Walter Scott, the literary idol of all who love beautiful books, the man of clean life and noble ideals, was dying he said to Lockhart, his son-in-law:

"Bring me the Book."

"What book?" asked Lockhart.

"*The* Book," said Sir Walter; "the Bible; there is but one." And through the Bible which was given him he got glimpses of the Shining Ones coming down to the river to meet him.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH.

A divine basis—in the heart of God and nature of Christ.
A human basis—the prophets and apostles.
A doctrinal basis—the confession of Peter.

THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH.

The body of Christ. Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:18.
The family of God. Eph. 3:15.
The house of God. 1 Timothy 3:15.
An eternal body. Heb. 12:23.

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHURCH.

Divine and human.
Temporal and eternal.
Visible and invisible.
Local and universal.
Practical and ideal.
Static and dynamic.
Always dying, always being born.
The institution of a dogma and the spring of an ever fresh experience.

NAME OF THE CHURCH.

The organization: Called "the church" 99 times; "Church of God" 11 times; "Churches of Christ" once; "Brotherhood" once.
Individual members: "Christians," 3; "Believers," 3; "Friends," 4; "Saints," 61; "Brethren," 225; "Disciples," 268 times.

ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH.

Jesus the maker and builder. He said, "I will build my church."
Commenced organization with apostles.
Completed it through the Holy Spirit. Acts 6:1-7; 14: 23; Eph. 4:9-12.

PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH.

To reveal God to men.
To Christianize the whole world. Matt. 28:18-20.
To complete the sufferings of Christ on earth. Col. 1:24.
To lead in the moral battles of mankind. Eph. 6:10-18.

THE BIG TASKS BEFORE THE CHURCH.

Getting rights and justice for the weak.
Destroying war.
Establishing international brotherhood.

CHAPTER V

THE CHURCH AND ITS PURPOSE

THE Church of which we are thinking in this chapter is the Church of which Jesus Christ said, "On this rock I will build my Church; and the powers of Hades shall not succeed against it." (Matt. 16:18. Moffatt.) It is the Church which the Disciples are seeking to restore and to propagate. Its survival in spite of every kind of opposition from its enemies, and its growth and progress notwithstanding the neglect, the strife and the misrepresentation of its friends, mark it as the miracle of history.

It has had no army to protect it nor enforce its ideas. It controls no societies of wealth so that it would be possible for it to put the iron ring of want around those who might not agree with its aims and work. The early Church had not, neither has the Church today, such alliance with any earthly government that it could disseminate its doctrines or build its organization by force.

Yet it has lived and does live and is the strongest, the most mobile, agile, forward-looking, inclusive, industrious and wide-awake body in the world. Of all the general organizations on earth the Church alone kept its morale during the World

War. We confidently believe that no shock nor terror of the future can overthrow it or permanently hurt it.

"During this long succession of centuries it has outlived the destruction of Jerusalem, the dissolution of the Roman empire, fierce persecutions from without, and heretical corruptions from within, the barbarian invasion, the confusion of the dark ages, the papal tyranny, the shock of infidelity, the ravages of revolution, the attacks of enemies and the errors of friends, the rise and fall of proud kingdoms, empires, and republics, philosophical systems, and social organizations without number. And, behold, it still lives, and lives in greater strength and wider extent than ever; controlling the progress of civilization, and the destinies of the world; marching over the ruins of human wisdom and folly, ever forward and onward; spreading silently its heavenly blessings from generation to generation, and from country to country, to the ends of the earth. It can never die; it will never see the decrepitude of old age; but, like its Divine Founder, it will live in the unfading freshness of self-renewing youth and the unbroken vigor of manhood to the end of time, and will outlive time itself. Single denominations and sects, human forms of doctrine, government, and worship, after having served their purpose, may disappear and go the way of all flesh; but the

Church Universal of Christ, in her divine life and substance, is too strong for the gates of hell." (Schaff.)

The Origin of the Church

The Church was instituted by Jesus Christ. He said, "I will build my Church." It is therefore, of divine origin and continues to be upheld, directed and used as the body of Jesus Christ acting in the field of human experience.

1. The Church idea roots back into the Old Testament era. Through many centuries God has had a people whom he called out from the world. These people known to us as the Jews were a nation, rather than a Church, but God's purposes for the peoples of earth were lodged in them. They became the apostles of the divine ideal, and prepared the world for the coming of Christ and his Church.

2. But the Church is a New Testament institution. In the nature of the case there could not be a Church of Jesus Christ until after he lived his life as a revelation and manifestation of God's purposes, died on the cross as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, and was buried and arose from the dead to bring life and immortality to light through the gospel.

3. How Christ built his Church may be easily traced in the New Testament. He called about him disciples and apostles to whom he gave the

message of God for the peoples of earth. He called together a people, gave them a doctrine, and imparted to them a power. The people are the Church, the doctrine is the gospel and the power is the Holy Spirit who dwells in the Church for interpretation, cleansing, guidance and perpetual awakening and inspiration.

4. The Church is perpetually renewed by the streams of people who are won by its preaching to accept Christ as the Son of God, to own Him as Master, and Lord, to seek his presence in the communion, his comfort in the promises, and his training in the teaching. "The essence of the Church lies in the Savior who reigns and the people he governs. Where he is there is his Church; and where he reigns, there are his people."

5. An illustration of how the Church was divinely organized and divinely perpetuated may be seen in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Jesus Christ who had ascended to heaven and been crowned both Lord and Christ, after his crucifixion and resurrection poured out the Holy Spirit upon his apostles, and inspired them to preach the gospel with tongues of fire. The people heard, believed, repented, confessed Christ, were baptized into his Name and added to the Church.

6. To become a member of the Church it is necessary to have an inner experience, an outward expression, a divine blessing, and a new social at-

tachment. The inner experience is to hear and believe the gospel, and to repent of sin. The outward expression is to confess Christ as Lord and be immersed in his name. The divine blessing is to have God remit one's sins and grant him the gift of the Holy Spirit. The new social alignment is to become a member of the visible organization. These things performed with the spirit and understanding make one a member of the Church as it is in the sight and intention of God. (Acts 2:36, 37, 38, 42, 47.)

All of this is profoundly spiritual. It reaches the depth of the relationship between God and man, and between man and man. It is to have the eternal atonement by which we are made one with God, and an abiding reconciliation with our fellowmen. It is the greatest spiritual revolution the soul can experience in this world. Its symbol and power is the cross. (See also Chapter X in this book.)

The Nature of the Church

It is an error to think of the Church as being only "another human organization" or a kind of sacred or religious lodge for the people who wish that kind of association. It partakes of the divine nature for it is sublimely described as "the Church of the living God," and in a beautiful and familiar way, with a speech I trust we all understand as "the house of God" (1 Timothy 3:15),

"the habitation of God" (Ephesians 2:22) and it is called "his body" (Ephesians 1:23). It is thus a Shekinah, a perpetual incarnation, and the instrument of Christ's work in the world—his army, his herald and his school. Let the Church therefore be considered a divine institution.

In the field of history "the Church he (Christ) founded was not a state, a hierarchy, a coercive authority, a kingdom of this world, but a spiritual society, consisting of those who, by a faith like Peter's in Jesus Christ himself, are built into him as lively stones."

The Church is both an organization and an organism. As an organization it is equipped with officers and directors. These are chosen by the members in a democratic way. It is their part in the management of the Church. It is their high privilege of co-operating with God in the enterprise of serving humanity. As an organism the Church has a life that is perpetually extending itself and depositing the energy and cutting out the new channels through which the divine life flows into the world.

Both as an organization and as an organism the Church is an instrument of the Holy Spirit who saves it from crystallizing and falling into a crude and stereotyped manner of doing things. The Church like Paul must die daily but it is also re-

newed daily by the inflow of the divine life through teaching and prayer.

1. The Church is the society of Jesus. (Eph. 5: 25-27.) He is its Lord, its head, its director. It is spoken of as the body of Christ. (Eph. 5:29, 30.) He is always to be found in the midst of his Church, as symbolized in the book of Revelation by "seven golden candlesticks." (Rev. 1:12-16.) Hence among the designations of members of the apostolic church was the name "Christian." They had been made over and were filled with Christ's spirit. His mark was upon them. Their character was a Christian character. They were like Christ. Christ was in them, the experience and the hope of glory. So that when Peter and John appeared before the council and spoke with boldness it was written, "They marvelled and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." (Acts 4: 13.) The Church of Christ is the beginning of the New Humanity.

2. The Church is a society of believers. Dr. R. F. Horton truly says:

> Although a systematic doctrine of the Church is neither to be found nor to be looked for in the New Testament, certain characteristic notes or features of the Christian Society are brought before us from which we can form some conception as to its nature. The fundamental note is faith. It was to Peter confessing his faith in Christ that the promise came, "Upon this rock will I build my church" (Matt. 16:18). Until Jesus

found a man full of faith He could not begin to build His church; and unless Peter had been the prototype of others whose faith was like his own, the walls of the Church would never have arisen into the air. Primarily the Church is a society not of thinkers or workers or even of worshipers, but of believers. Hence we find that "believers" or "they that believed" is constantly used as a synonym for the members of the Christian society (e. g., Acts 2:44; 4:32; 5:14; 1 Tim. 4:12). Hence, too, the rite of baptism, which from the first was the condition of entrance into the apostolic church and the seal of membership in it, was recognized as preeminently the sacrament of faith and of confession (Acts 2:41; 8:13-36; Rom. 6:4; 1 Cor. 12:13). This church-founding and church-building faith, of which baptism was the seal, was much more than an act of intellectual assent. It was a personal laying hold of the personal Savior, the bond of a vital union between Christ and the believer which resulted in nothing less than a new creation (Rom. 6:4; 8:1, 2; 2 Cor. 5:17).

3. The Church is a brotherhood. In the New Testament its members are called "brethren." It put the brotherhood idea into the world and has acted by that doctrine through the centuries. A true Church is organized love. "Love the brotherhood" is a divine injunction.

This love did not end merely in kind feelings and civil conduct of the members toward one another. It was seen also in the fellowship of giving. In the earliest chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, we find that there was a community of goods established. People sold all they had and made a

common fund. This was distributed "unto each according as any one had need." There was a wonderful, sacrificial stewardship—"not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own." (Acts 4:32.)

The idea of a common possession was purely voluntary and later became so modified that we do not hear of it again. But it did not die. It only changed form.

After this Jerusalem incident, stewardship became the ideal expression of consecration and brotherhood. A man is bound to use what he has, as being the possession of God, while he himself is its agent.

The brotherhood idea was further emphasized in the meetings of which the Lord's Supper was the central fact. They came to the Communion to learn of Christ, to experience Christ. They came as brethren. They were all equal before him. There was no vanity, no rank and order, no caste. Christ was the Master and they were brethren.

4. The Church is a character-building society. Hence one of the names of the early Christian was "saint." God called out a people to purify them unto himself. One of the most striking facts in the early Church was the emphasis placed upon character. So much was stress laid upon this, so fine were the characters produced by it, and so great

was the contrast to heathen character and ethics that the Christians were called a third race.

True to the apostolic doctrine and practice, the Church is valued still by the high type of men and women it produces. Greater than writing literature, painting pictures, organizing states or inventing wonderful machines is the making of the new character in Christ Jesus. It is character by regeneration and it is fostered and grown to perfection by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

5. The Church is a society of learners. One of the names for its members often used in the New Testament, is "disciples." Disciple means learner. Every one who belongs to the Church, if he is a good Church member, is a perpetual learner in the things and ways of Jesus Christ. This name for the Christian is used oftener than any other in the New Testament. It is beautiful in humility. It carries the picture of Jesus sitting on the mount, preaching the immortal sermon, while his disciples are seated about him with radiant, eager faces, learning his "wonderful words of life." No finer illustration of the Church exists.

6. The Church is a society of saviors.

We gather this from Paul's statement that he becomes all things to all men that by all means he might save some. (1 Cor. 9:22.) Our Master taught the same when he told his disciples they were the salt of the earth and the light of the

world. One of the best definitions of the Church we know is as follows:

The Church is the association of those who love, in the service of those who suffer.

Its highest influence is to inspire men and women to live by love and to work by love; its highest service to "rescue the perishing and care for the dying."

Mission of the Church

This phase of the subject has been anticipated in the preceding section, but for the sake of clearness and fulness we must set it forth directly, as well as indirectly. Besides, there is much not yet said on this topic.

The mission of the Church is the mission of the Master. Whatever he did while he was in the world the Church must do. It fulfills all its duty by making known Christ's purposes and by inspiring men with his spirit. This invests the soul with the power that will energize it to live the life and bear the fruits Jesus intended. He meant it as a saving environment for the individual; and through individuals, a redeeming power for society. That means to organize society for good instead of evil. It sets up the task of making good men and women as the supreme duty. That is its redemptive work. (Luke 24:46-49.) The whole power of the Church is to be used to that end.

That is the object of all the forces, offices, organizations and personalities of the Church. It lifts altruism into the realm of the spiritual and gives us the higher Christian ranges of the grand old commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

"And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, * * * * unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of man, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; but speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ." (Ephesians 4:11-15.) The final purpose of God wrought out in this world is seen in redeemed men and women.

1. The supreme power of the Church in redeeming the race is to reveal God as Father and to show men how to live together as his children. This was Christ's mission in the world. He said in his Upper Room prayer that he had made God known to his disciples that they might have the eternal life which comes from God and Christ. (John 17: 3, 4.)

2. The second help in redeeming the race is witness bearing. (Acts 1:8.) There are two or three

ways in which witness may be borne. (a) There is the witness of character. A Christian is a burning bush out of which God speaks. We must live as Christ lived. No one can doubt Christ incarnate in righteous men and women. (b) A second way is by knowing the New Testament and teaching it. (c) A third is by worship. This involves church attendance. Public worship is a powerful and winsome witness of the reality and presence of God. Often those who come to church to scoff will remain to pray when they see others at prayer. (d) Preaching the Word and hymn-singing are methods of testifying for God. True preaching is revelation. (e) The administration of the ordinances also bears witness to the authority, goodness and power of God and Christ, and to the cleansing and joy-giving presence of the Holy Spirit.

3. The Church is charged with the task of conserving truth. It is called the pillar and ground of the truth. (1 Tim. 3:15.) This commits the Church to complete friendliness to truth wherever found.

It should be the friend of science, as well as it is of religion. It should be the pillar and ground of the truth as respects positive, constructive movements and reforms. It is fatal for the Church to be on the wrong side, or silent when great moral crises arise.

The Church is the custodian of the Bible. It is

to guard it sacredly and build by it industriously. It must broadcast it to the world in every way possible. The truth that makes men free is in the New Testament.

Conflicts between heterodoxy and orthodoxy, and strife between the faithful and the heretical are to be greatly deplored. Nevertheless it is the first duty of the Church to guard its trust of the Bible, and see that no irreverent adventurer casts doubt upon its divine origin or sublime truths. It is like keeping the fountains of life pure from poison and contamination. This is peculiarly the duty of the scholars of the Church and it reminds us that nothing is more needed in the Church than thoroughly reverent and honest Christian scholars. By this is meant not simply men who have a general belief in religion but men who believe in a personal God, in his Son Jesus Christ, men who give themselves up to the leadership of his spirit, who love God and their fellowmen, and who believe the Bible to be the word of God.

4. The program of the Church for spreading these needful and sublime ideas is given by Jesus Christ himself in Matt. 28:18-20. It is a wonderful program, reaching as far as the farthest man of the race, going as deep as his utmost needs, and enduring to the last year of time.

This means, taken as a whole, that it is the duty of the Church to Christianize all mankind, in every

department of life and in all its works, pleasures, recreations and associations. It means the creation of a complete Christian order, the enlargement of the Church itself to be coterminous with all races and nations. Christ thought in the largest terms and gave his bigness of vision and spirit of adventure to his followers.

The power of the Church is to be found in preaching, baptizing and teaching, and this is perpetually renewed by the presence of Christ who never fails a loyal people.

The Church's Power and Influence

Jesus told his disciples that whatsoever they bound on the earth should be bound in heaven. He gave to them the keys of the kingdom, which meant in a large way that the Church is to fix the destiny of mankind. Its continuing and increasing power shows that this is to be the case. The Church has always dealt with spiritual forces that are indestructible, divine and eternal. The heart of the world is crying out for these things today and has been all through history. It never gives a stone when a hungry heart asks for bread. A holy Church is the true guide for society. It keeps love alive in the world. It keeps faith alive in the world. It puts men in mind of their own souls and is in perpetual warfare with what harms humanity. The Church is indeed a society of saviors. It shows a lost world the way home to the Father.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE ORDINANCES.

Christianity is revealed in three aspects—doctrine, ethics, and ritual.
(a) Doctrine pertains to the intellect.
(b) Ethics directs the life.
(c) Ritual expresses the heart.
Of course, all phases involve all experience and emotions to a degree.

THE ORDINANCES OF DIVINE ORIGIN.

Given by Jesus Christ.
He commanded baptism for all who believe. Mark 16:15.
He gave the Lord's Supper to all who love. Luke 22: 19, 20.

THE ORDINANCES ARE PERPETUAL.

Baptism lasts till the end of the world. Matt. 28:18-20.
The Lord's Supper lasts till he come. 1 Cor. 11:26.

VALUE OF THE ORDINANCES.

Tests of the heart which show (1) love to God and (2) love to man.
They reveal loyalties and ideals—like symbols, language, monuments.
They inspire—like pledge, promise, oath, seal, covenant.
They establish and hold allegiances—like the flag, "the old wayside cross" and pictures.
They dramatize the inner experiences of the life of God and Jesus Christ in the soul.

THE POWER OF THE ORDINANCES.

They unite Christians by polarizing their feelings about a common center and fixing affections on things above.
Eternity is mirrored in the ordinances. They are prophetic.
They belong to the category of worship.
They impress outsiders with the depth and beauty of religion.
They are overt acts which enable people to fix their minds and hearts on Jesus Christ.
They commit the soul to Christ in the most beautiful and solemn acts.

CHAPTER VI

THE ORDINANCES AND THEIR REASON

IT would be more nearly correct to speak of Christian ordinances than of Church ordinances. The Church itself has neither the authority nor the spiritual genius to establish a symbol binding upon the followers of the Master. Only Christ could appoint a symbol which would be binding, enriching and satisfying enough for an ordinance to express the language of the soul seeking the presence and blessing of God. The ordinances are in nature sacraments and indeed are almost universally so designated. The Latin word *sacramentum* meant to the Roman mind, the oath of allegiance taken by a soldier to a general. It came to mean, in Christian thought, a sacred covenant. We like to think of the ordinances as the soul's oath of loyalty to the Great Captain of our salvation. The sacraments or ordinances are the physical acts by which the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed and applied to believers. Says Dr. W. W. Clow, "Sacraments are those rites or ordinances which have been instituted to symbolize the truths of the spirit evident to the soul, by the things of nature evident to the senses." An idea worthy of much study because it shows how deeply rooted in reality the ordinances are.

How the Ordinances Arose

The ordinances accepted and taught generally by the Protestant churches, because taught in the New Testament, are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. They were both appointed by Jesus Christ before the Church itself came into existence. The Master gave them, the Church administered them. The day of Pentecost is almost universally regarded as the birthday of the Church. But the Master established the Supper the same night in which he was betrayed. He anticipated the mighty fact it was to memorialize in the most solemn and impressive manner. He caught the high, tender mood of the Upper Room and perpetuated it forever in this ordinance of the heart, this seal of an eternal friendship. Baptism was commanded after his resurrection and just before his ascension. It would appear that before that hour he had not specifically set his own authority upon it. He never baptized in water. But now when he would establish a great loyalty he appointed this expressive rite.

Neither Baptism nor the Lord's Supper was observed with full Christian content until the establishment of the Church and the proclamation of the gospel on the day of Pentecost. They came in as symbols to mediate and unite the deeper things of the Spirit and the more external things of organization. They are, therefore, both inward and

outward, and no matter how much abused—and surely they have been used badly enough—they still impart a power that can come from no other source. The Church is to give them perpetually to those for whom they are divinely intended till the end of the ages for the purpose which Christ meant when he appointed them.

Only Two Ordinances

The Greek and Roman Catholic churches teach that there are seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, the Lord's Supper, Penance, Extreme Unction, Ordination and Matrimony.

When the Reformers detected the corruptions of the Church in their day and brought its doctrines and practices to the test of the Word of God, they found that the ceremonies observed under the names of Confirmation, Penance and Extreme Unction had no warrant in Scripture, and that Ordination and Matrimony, though certainly divine institutions, are not symbolical ordinances, are not applicable to all believers as such and that they were not instituted by Jesus Christ. Matrimony is one of the oldest institutions in the world. It is holy and essential both to the home and to society, but it is as much of the State as of the Church. This does not detract from its essential sacredness and obligatory meaning, but it removes marriage from the category of the sacraments. Confirmation, Penance, and Extreme Unction are church

customs. The last two have been attended by great abuses, not to say scandals.

Only Baptism and the Lord's Supper were appointed by Christ himself for perpetual and everlasting observance as ordinances or rites and they alone have any obligatory claims as such in the New Testament Church. Hence the Disciples practice these alone as true Church ordinances and not the least of their contributions has been to help fix them in their proper places in Christian experience and worship, and to exalt them again in the honor and appreciation of Christians.

Why Ordinances at All

One or two religious groups have discarded them entirely as having no place in a spiritual religion but these bodies have made little progress. If every other church had dismissed them, those bodies which reject them entirely could not have been held together. Yet it is fair and profitable to ask why ordinances at all, and there is no embarrassment in finding justification for them in reason as well as in the Scriptures.

The necessity for such ordinances arises from the constitution of human nature itself. Man consists of a body by which he is connected with the material world; of a soul that unites him with society; and of a spirit, by which he has communion with the eternal. The ordinances are based upon the necessity for social utterance of these three

aspects of man's nature. They may be arbitrary signs and expressions, as it is possible speech may be, but they are essential to the utterance of feelings, dreams and ideals too deep for words, too spiritual for analysis and too intuitional for cold, formal logic. Yet when tested by the most rigid logic they stand. They are justified by history and experience; they are organized into, and interwoven with, the constitution of the Church. They are the answer of God to the deep prayer of humanity and the answer of man to the loving call of God. (1 Peter 3:21.) They are rooted in the Scriptures so that wherever the Bible is taken as a rule of faith and practice these ordinances exist. They could not be broken down without greatly impairing, perhaps without completely destroying the power and spirituality of organized Christianity.

The ordinances, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, answer in a very unique and remarkable way to the ideas of modern psychology. By so much as that is scientific these ordinances are scientific. If there is such a thing as the subconscious mind into which pass the impressions of experiences, memories, facts and ideas, where they form a kind of reserve that comes into active service in times of crisis and perpetually rise up to give color and substance to thought and life, then Baptism and the Lord's Supper must be reckoned as among the

most useful of all experiences, helps and dynamics stored away in the subconscious mind or in the conscious memory. No man who acted in good faith when baptized ever forgets his baptism, and life is perpetually refreshed and sweetened by the Lord's Supper. If there is anything in the hypothesis of "suggestion," the Christian ordinances are to be considered the most powerful influences that can be projected into the soul. "God works through a power of newness of life which arises within the needy soul. The gifts of God wait upon something that happens in the minds of men, some profound, burning, passionate, conviction of the whole mind conscious and subconscious." The conviction that causes man to sift his own soul and search for God in the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, gives God entrance into man's mind, into his essential being. It is a scientific, psychological basis of the power of a ceremony. It shows the enlightenment by the ordinances. It is explained in the Word, "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God." Symbol is not reality but it is a help or guide to reality. The musical staff is not music, not reality, but it leads to it. People could not sing together without observing symbols, nor can they find spiritual reality without observing ritual. Civilization could not exist without ritual, neither can a Church.

It is at this point that religion presses art into service. The ritual of religion is its drama of the heart and soul, its picture of the idea that would otherwise be forever hidden, and the method by which vision is made experience. One had as well deny the service of art to culture and life as the service of the ordinances to religious experience. A quotation from Dr. Georges Duhamel, the eminent French writer, illustrates the idea. He declares:

It cannot be said any longer that pure art is of no use: it helps us to live.

It helps us to live, in the most practical manner and every day.

Every moment you make instinctive, reiterated, and forcible appeals to all forms of art. And that not only in order to express your thought, but still more and above all to shape your thought, to think your thought.

You find yourself in the midst of a landscape, and there is an image at the back of your eye. The manner in which you accept and interpret this image bears the mark of your personality and also of a crowd of other personalities which you call to your aid without knowing it.

You live in a sonorous universe where everything is rhythm, tone, number and harmony: human voices, the great sounds of nature, the artificial uproar of society envelops you in a vibrant and complex network that you ought unceasingly to decipher and translate. Well, this you cannot do without submitting to the influence of the great souls who have occupied themselves with these things. The understanding of movements, harmonies, rhythms, only comes to you at the moment when the

musicians reveal their secret to you, since they have been able, in some fashion, to interest you in them.

In the same way Christianity is helped by the ordinances which have come out of its life, as has music, architecture, the Church, a new culture, and a new and purer social atmosphere.

Ordinances or rites are essential to the life of society itself. They express and intensify the right relationship between people. Handshaking is the ritual of friendship. The handshake is not friendship but an expression of it and by that fact fosters and increases friendship. It is likely that friendship would perish from among men if handshaking were to cease. We end quarrels by it. We express the consummation of profound unions by it. John Smith and B. W. Stone shook hands at the union of the "Disciples" and "Christians" in symbol of the inner experience. The abstract and somewhat fantastic expression, "Hands across the sea," has made a real contribution to international friendship. The mental picture it draws works a charm.

"Symbols then enter largely into the daily life of any community that has a past in common. Certain actions stand as the expression of certain inner realities" and make them more certain in the soul, in life, and in society by expressing them. "The expression is in no sense a pretense; it is the only way, or at least the commonly accepted way,

of manifesting forth a reality which otherwise could not be seen or heard or touched." Manners and morals are much more intimately connected than most people imagine. Break down manners and you have certainly destroyed the first line of defense for morals. The habit of saying "good morning," even though a habit, contributes much to optimism, and helps to make many a happy day.

These illustrations show the depth of our every day unconscious ritual; but how much more powerful it becomes, when given as the solemn act of a body of people, and the quest and expression of God's will, in such symbols as Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

After having thus shown that ordinances or sacraments are demanded by the constitution of society and the longings and outreach of the soul, it must be frankly stated that the Disciples accept them on the authority of Jesus Christ as set forth in the New Testament. He is Lord of all and he established the ritual by which the soul shows its faith in him and blossoms out in the beauty of love and worship. Jesus said, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit." Like the apostle Paul we say of the Lord's Supper:

> For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he

brake it, and said, This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me. In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come.

The ordinances rest on the authority of Christ. They are for each, they are for all, they are perpetual, they are time-long, "till he come."

There has been much discussion, bitter and deplorable, over these rites, but that shows their deep hold on men's hearts. It may even be doubted whether Christianity could have lived as a force in life and history without them. How long would Masonry last without the lodge and the ritual? When the early Christians were driven into the catacombs and caves of the mountains, these ordinances kept memory alive; memory vitalized faith; faith inspired loyalty; loyalty held them to one another and to Christ, and thus it came to pass that the young Church was indestructible.

Marks of True Ordinances

The problem connected with the Christian ordinances has always been to make them real; to have them physical and outward, and at the same time to keep them so they would minister to the spiritual life instead of promoting legalism and superstition. To fulfill such an office they must have several characteristics:

1. They must be simple, so as not to be mistaken for reality within themselves; so simple that they can be performed by people who have nothing as well as by the rich. If they did fulfil these conditions, but few could observe them. Suppose the memorial to Christ required a Taj Mahal of white alabaster, with its crystal and marble and exquisite peacock throne of precious stones, with its cost of millions, and the years necessary to construct it and the artistic glory it embodies—instead of being the simple supper it is—who could observe it? Suppose it required a pilgrimage to Christ's tomb in order to show proper worship—how many would keep up their love for him? And would not those who erected the magnificent structure, or made the long, tiresome pilgrimage, imagine that they had thereby purchased their own cleansing from sin? That would, indeed, make the ordinances misleading.

2. The ordinances must be of such a character that they cannot be used idolatrously. The Lord's Supper has at times been almost so treated. This is a blasphemous abuse that can only be prevented by keeping close to the simplicity of the New Testament. The ordinances must be used to make Christ more real, not to obscure him.

3. The ordinances must be fitting symbolically. Such are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. In them both the sacrificial and sacramental system of

Christianity are pictured. The Lord's Supper is the emblem of the blood shed on the cross, while Baptism is a pictorial enactment of the death, burial, resurrection and beginning of the new life in Jesus Christ.

4. They must be connected with character building, not magically, but in the same way that language is, as the outward expression of inner thought and purpose. They must carry an enlightening message, a purifying consecration, and a strengthening inspiration. Christianity has mystical and miraculous aspects but there is not a tinge of magic in it and whoever treats it superstitiously, mechanically, or commercially, has missed its whole genius and power.

5. The ordinances must carry true social implications, and Baptism and the Lord's Supper stand the test. For they put men forth confessing the highest principles; aiming at the sublimest character; and uniting themselves together as brothers. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are social as well as religious ordinances. Through them, one declares himself a social force, as well as a saved soul. They are intended for others, as well as for those receiving them. They are the sign and seal, the bond and ratification, of the relationship of souls in "the beloved community." By them the man who has chosen Christ brings his new life out into the open.

6. They must be intended to connect the soul with God. In their deepest nature, they are of the essence of worship. For man performs them to show his faith and love, and to make himself more worthy of the possible greatness of his own soul. The ordinances partake of the nature of prayer.

7. To be Christian, a symbol must be *authoritative* and not merely *accidental* or the outgrowth of custom. In a good sense it must be *arbitrary,* for then the acceptance of it owns Christ's right to make tests of men's sincerity. A man may accept or reject it, thus showing also the sovereignty of his spirit.

There can be no reasonable doubt of the spiritual validity of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. What is needed, is not to decry them, neglect them nor alter them as some do, but to live on the spiritual levels to which they lift us in the golden glow of our first love for Christ, the life to which we pledge ourselves when we pass under the spell of the Three Great Names.

No Substitutes for the Ordinances

The question will arise to those who reflect upon the ordinances from every point of view, why the Church might not acceptably change them or invent substitutes that would seemingly suit its own environment and age better. The idea should be treated fairly.

An all-sufficient answer would be that no such

change is needed. All the elements of comprehensiveness and adaptability inhere in those we already have. They express just what one wishes to have expressed, and they carry with them the riches, the sacredness and the flavor of two thousand years of observance by people dedicating their lives to Christ, and seeking to feel the flame of his life warming their hearts.

They were given by Christ. That alone enshrines them, as they are, sacredly in the Christian heart. It is an inexpressible satisfaction to have something just as Christ gave it, to do something just as Christ directed it.

To change the ordinances would introduce a liberty which holds great possibilities of harm. If the ordinances can be changed why not anything else? Where would the revisions stop? Sentiment, authority, expediency, and utility are against substituting anything for the ordinances as Christ delivered them to his Church.

The principle involved may be illustrated by a beautiful and penetrating paragraph from an essay on poetry by the English poet, John Drinkwater. He points out that poet after poet uses the same metrical forms, although they might invent others. This is because the poet's instinct tells him that they are the right and natural ones for language to fall into. He says:

> But the strange and wonderful thing is that each poet, while he adds to his authority by using these traditional

forms, is able to impress them with his own personal sense of rhythm in such a way that they never grow stale, and are indeed new things with each new poet who uses them.

The old summer returns—the same old wonderful, beautiful summer, but the green verdure with which the trees cover themselves and the fresh flowers blooming are as "marvellously new, as truly exciting discoveries for us when we see them as though there had never been such life before." So the poet

Sees and feels and questions out of his individual life, until the old experience is transfigured into something radiantly new and interesting, and he breathes into the old forms of poetry his own delighted sense of rhythm, until they too become fresh and vivid as the flowers that come to us with untiring wonder year by year.

In the same way, the Christian ordinances are forever new and fresh, divine tokens, divine assurances, wonderful experiences and realities for each soul coming to Christ. We would not wish to change the world's great poems, nor its miracle of music and musical forms, nor the roses, nor the summer, nor Baptism nor the Lord's Supper.

"Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."—Jesus.

BAPTISM A DIVINE ORDINANCE.

Jesus was baptized. Matt. 3:14-17.
Jesus commanded baptism. Mark 16:15.
It is to be given in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Matt. 28:18-20.

BAPTISM A PERPETUAL ORDINANCE.

To accompany preaching to the end of the world. Matt. 28:18-20.

THE RIGHT TO BAPTISM.

For those who believe, repent and confess their sins. Mark 16:15; Acts 2:38.
For those who have received the Holy Spirit. Acts 10: 47, 48.
For those who want to receive remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38.
For those who would be united with Christ. Romans 6:5.
For those who would enter his church. Acts 2:38, 47.
For those who would confess Christ. Acts 8:35-39.

THE FORM OR ACTION OF BAPTISM.

A burial in water. Romans 6:4.
A resurrection out of the water. Romans 6:4.

CHURCH MUST BE FAITHFUL IN ADMINISTERING BAPTISM.

Commanded repentant people to be baptized. Acts 2:38.
"Teach all nations . . . baptizing them." Matt. 28: 18-20.
Must give full content of baptism. Acts 19:1-7.

THE PURPOSE AND BLESSINGS OF BAPTISM.

To fulfil all righteousness. Matt. 3:15.
It is the new birth, the beginning of the new life. John 3:3-8.
For the remission of sins. Acts 2:38.
In order to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38; Acts 19:1-7.
For union with Christ. Romans 6:5, 6.
For the experience of the resurrection power. Romans 6:8-11.
To put on Christ. Romans 6:3; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12.
A prayer of the heart. 1 Peter 3:21.

CHAPTER VII

BAPTISM, THE FAITH ORDINANCE

FOR many centuries baptism has been a storm-center in ecclesiastical and theological thinking, and it is still the occasion of much earnest, if not acrimonious, debate. But with the New Testament in our hands, it ought not to be hard to decide its place in spiritual experience. It should be thought of, and received, in the same spirit in which we approach prayer, or the Lord's Supper. We should neither over-emphasize nor undervalue it. It has a place in the organization of spirituality, and of the Church.

The Place of Baptism

Baptism is mentioned directly or indirectly in the New Testament no less than 115 times. The forerunner of Christ was called John the Baptist, because he preached in the wilderness and baptized those who came unto him. Jesus himself was baptized, declaring as his reason—"thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." This shows that Baptism is a spiritual experience and not a dogma; for Jesus Christ was neither a "literalist" nor a "legalist." To have due respect unto God's appointments, to perform them literally, as nearly

as possible, and to preach them earnestly, is not to fight against the deeper spiritual life, but on the other hand, it is to contend for it.

There was a difference between the baptism of John and the baptism of Jesus. Indeed, their disciples seem to have clashed over their respective claims, and sects of John's followers persisted for a considerable time after his death. But John recognized in Jesus the Messiah, and Jesus declared John the greatest born among women, and yet declared that he had not attained unto the greatness of the Kingdom. There was much in common in the baptism of John and the baptism of Jesus—for example the form and the rigid ethical demands of both. Both were also the challenges of a great opportunity.

As to the purpose of John's baptism, he was once asked by a deputation from Jerusalem why he baptized, and he replied in substance that it was to introduce Jesus. (John 1:25-28.) He declared that he was a voice preparing the way for Jesus.

John's baptism was temporal; Jesus' baptism was permanent. John's baptism was a kind of reformation; Jesus' was a new life. John's baptism was with reference to the first coming of Christ; Jesus' baptism was with reference to his second coming. John's baptism was for the Jews only; Jesus' baptism was for the whole world. John's

baptism was for Christ about to appear; Jesus' baptism was for Christ already come. John's baptism was to prepare a people; Jesus' baptism was to make way for a new spiritual order. John's baptism contemplated only repentance and forgiveness of sin; Jesus' baptism was for repentance, for remission of sins, for the confession of his Lordship, and for receiving the Holy Spirit. Christian Baptism is so deep that it is the sign, the seal, the beginning and the pledge of the new humanity Jesus came to create. "As many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." (Gal. 3:27.) "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature."

Jesus connected Baptism with the great commission, directing those who preached the gospel to baptize and to teach also. Baptism is put into the same category with preaching and teaching. It links these mighty creative spiritual forces to the life of the individual both outwardly and inwardly and gives them practical result. All those who entered the early Church came in by the confessional act of Baptism which completed their conversion and declared the beginning of the new life. (Acts 2:47.)

Who May be Baptized

Baptism is the final form of the confession of faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of the living God. When the devout Ethiopian officer was ardently

seeking the realization of the lyric prophecies of Isaiah in his own soul, and discovered that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was the Suffering Servant who bore the sins of the world, and asked what hindered him to be baptized, he was told that he might if he believed with all his heart. On declaring that he believed Jesus to be the Son of God, he was baptized. (Acts 8:32-39.) Baptism is for all those who would polarize their lives about Jesus Christ.

Baptism is, therefore, for all who understandingly, intentionally and sacrificially accept the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and want to declare that fact to the world. It is for those who feel broken, crushed and disgraced by sin, and are determined to throw it off; it is for such as are of a broken heart and a contrite spirit; it is for all, who having never received it, want to enter upon a larger life with the gladness and sense of the liberty it gives—like Lydia; it is for those who would enter the beloved community known as the Church, who want to live in the love of God and by the word and name of the Master. (Acts 2:38; Acts 8:34-39.)

No mere formalist should be baptized—for Baptism is a vital experience. It can only be religious as it is done of one's own choosing, with thoughtful purpose and conviction, with thirst for union with Jesus Christ and his people. Baptism leads

into the experience of the love of God which has been the satisfaction and the ecstasy of the saints of all ages. Baptism cannot be received by proxy; the soul receiving it must have part in it. A true baptism always carries the full, glad consent of the heart of the person being baptized. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

An unbeliever, a non-believer, an irresponsible person cannot be baptized. Even though he go through the form, it is not Baptism. It requires the union of the will of God and the will of man to make a baptism valid.

What Baptism Is

By this we refer to the elements and the action of it. As such it consists of (1) an inner experience; (2) of an outer form; and (3) a visible act.

1. The Inward Substance of Baptism

As an action of the soul it is the experience of God through man's desire to find him, to know him and to do his will. Its wonderful spiritual content may be judged from the fact that the candidate is baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This puts the divine, as well as the human, intent into Baptism. It is on the strength of the Great Commission (Matt. 28: 18-20) that the Three Names are invoked in Baptism. Sometimes baptism was only in the name of the Lord Jesus. (Acts 10:48; 19:5.) The calling

of the Three Names over the convert as he is being baptized expresses the prayer of the Church for him, as well as his own prayer for himself. It is an act of worship, for Jesus himself, by whom, in his own actions, it was first tied up with the Christian teaching, received it with prayer. Baptism is the cry of the heart for the forgiveness of God. (See 1 Peter 3:21. Moffatt.)

2. The Outward Form of Baptism

(a) The word *baptizo* is a Greek word. It is brought over into the English language without translation—Anglicized, as we say. The word means to dip, to plunge, to immerse.

(b) This meaning is also established by exegesis of references to the subject in the New Testament. The context of the word when used, will not allow any other meaning but immersion.

In the volume of "The International Critical Commentary" on Romans, by William Sanday and A. C. Headlam, both Oxford scholars, the following exegesis of the reference to Baptism in the sixth chapter of Romans is given:

Baptism has a double function.

(1) It brings the Christian into personal contact with Christ, so close that it may be fitly described as union with him.

(2) It expresses symbolically a series of acts corresponding to the redeeming acts of Christ.

Immersion = Death
Submersion = Burial (the ratification of death)
Emergence = Resurrection

This shows at once that only immersion can be considered the Scriptural form of Baptism, and at the same time reveals its entire appropriateness for the expression of the spiritual experience and idea to be conveyed.

(c) Likewise the figures and similes of Baptism in the New Testament all mean immersion. For example, "washing," "laver of regeneration," "burial," "resurrection," "suffering."

(d) The early history of the Church establishes the same fact. Sprinkling and pouring were introduced, and were allowable only in the emergency of sickness. In case of recovery, immersion was to be gone through with by the person having received affusion. This makes it more certain that the form of apostolic baptism was immersion. Sprinkling and pouring were introduced far this side of the days of the apostles; hence they are human substitutes for the divine appointment.

3. Visibly as an Act of Witnessing

Baptism is a visible act by which the witness of it understands that the one being baptized is dedicating his life to Christ and the Church. Baptism is the experience that translates one from being a non-Christian to being a Christian.

The form of baptism is thus important to the one receiving it, to the fellowship into which he is to enter, and to the outside world which the church is seeking to win to Christ as Savior, Lord and Friend. That is why the Disciples insist on immersion as a prerequisite to church membership. In his excellent little book, "Our American Churches," Professor William Warren Sweet rightly interprets when he says:

"As to doctrine they asked that all agree to accept the Scriptures. On the matter of baptism there was a struggle, but finally they agreed on that mode that is recognized by all—namely, immersion. Both Stone and the Campbells had been Presbyterians and as such had accepted sprinkling as a mode of baptism, but on adopting immersion they recognized the fact that many earnest people could not accept sprinkling, while all recognized immersion as a valid mode."

It takes no argument to show the many advantages of having one language, one Lord, one faith, one baptism for the churches.

What Baptism Does for Us

One of the obstacles to the proper interpretation of the teachings of Jesus has always been that his followers have insisted upon thinking of them theologically, instead of under the aspect of life, and nothing has suffered more in this respect than Baptism. It has been entangled with philosophy,

theology, metaphysics and mysticism until it has seemed to some miraculous and to others superstitious. We get the true view of it only as we see that Christ gave us a way of life, and not a theological system. Baptism is an open declaration of purpose to walk in that way, and it is an experience that will help us to do so.

This can be understood from the New Testament, and by the use made of Baptism in the apostolic Church. It is certain that it is not to be taken in any magical, commercial, formal, or miraculous sense. It is spiritual in purpose and intention, as we know from the New Testament, and from what follows in personal and social experience. The community accepts men at a different valuation after their baptism, and the baptized themselves have a different feeling and attitude to their own lives and to life in general. There are mystical aspects in Baptism—depths we cannot fathom; but it was intended to be followed by a new life, and we have noted that in thousands of instances a higher level of living is attained after Baptism and through Baptism.

Even the baptism of Jesus was followed by (1) the open heaven—suggesting access to God; (2) the descending dove—meaning the full indwelling of the Holy Spirit; (3) and the voice of God declaring him His beloved Son—the voice of assurance.

If Baptism was a blessing to Jesus, who was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, what must it be to sinful man who needs forgiveness, cleansing and every re-enforcement of his nature? Baptism feeds the inner life and gives a better outer environment.

We begin to encompass the real meaning of Baptism when we pass over the controversial aspects and think of it in relation to character and personality. What does not contribute to character and life has no place in the divine economy. In the New Testament "nothing moves with aimless feet." Baptism is both initiatory and dedicatory but it goes much further.

1. It is a profound experience which, because of spiritual intention, possesses a sacramental quality. It is one of the most spiritual commitments by which the soul can express its devotion to God, and to his Church, and it undoubtedly has force in the making, development and quality of human character, yea, even of human personality. Character is built by motives and actions. It is the deposit of prayer wrought into permanent reality by conduct. This being true, Baptism has a profound connection with character, for it contains all the great dreams and resolutions that can work constructively in the human heart.

2. In Baptism one owns the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and girds himself with a great loyalty. He becomes a member of Christ's body, and hence

roots his life in the soil of brotherhood. Since Baptism is an outward act it has important social implications. The baptized are united in the formation of a sacramental society. In the last analysis, Baptism is the declaration of the faith and the desire to make Christ the Lord of society and to establish the fulness of spiritual kinship between his followers. Loyalty and fellowship are the corollaries of Baptism, and their finest product is Christian character. (Acts 2:36-38; 10:36.)

3. The second motive in Baptism is to break completely with the old life of sin and follow Jesus Christ. It is a pledge to live the white life. It is the token given to God and society that one is determined to keep himself unspotted from the world. It is the effort of the true Christian knight to honor Christ by the white flower of a stainless life. It is in this sense that Baptism is for the remission of sins. Paul says in the sixth chapter of Romans that we are baptized "in order to crush the sinful body and free us from any further slavery to sin." (Moffatt.) Baptism, therefore, is an act in which one resolves to give up at any cost, or at all costs, the life of sin. That is a heroic hour when one takes up such a battle! And in Baptism one seeks the divine aid which comes in the gift of the Holy Spirit that helps all our infirmities. (Acts 2:38; Rom. 8:26-29; Col. 3:1-17.)

4. Baptism expresses the passion to become united with Jesus Christ. The idea is a mystical

one, but it is of the very essence of personal religion. Nothing short of that has reality—nothing else satisfies the heart. The truly Christian soul wishes to enter into the earthly experiences of Jesus Christ. This commits one to the sacrificial life. He becomes willing, he believes himself able, to be baptized with the baptism Jesus was baptized with (Mark 10:38-40). Love always wants the deepest union with the beloved. Baptism is a dramatic picture of the soul's effort to enter into passions and experiences of Jesus Christ. "Our baptism in his death made us share his burial so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live and move in the new sphere of life." (Rom. 6:4. Moffatt.)

5. Paul taught that Baptism is the prophecy, perhaps even the beginning of the resurrection life. It is performed in view of that grand consummation. When one is baptized, he declares that he is searching for immortality, and he begins at once to live forever. The Easter lily has blossomed in his heart with deathless beauty and fragrance. Paul says: "If we have grown into him by a death like his, we shall grow into him by a resurrection like his." (Romans 6:5. Moffatt.) One who enters into Baptism intelligently, humbly and passionately seeking for God, undoubtedly has stirrings of the eternal life awakened in him in an unusual way. (Romans 8:11.)

6. Baptism is an experience that exalts the mind and makes the soul elate with the highest desires and resolutions. It has been called an enlightenment, and is near of kin to the ecstasy and pure rapture of the mystic; hence we read again in the New Testament: "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God." (Col. 3:1-17.) It must be, therefore, that a quality of heavenly mindedness is received in the service of Baptism. It stirs the innermost depths of being, and harnesses man to ideals and forces that develop him into Christlikeness. It gives visions of the open heavens, experiences of the Holy Spirit and assurances of acceptance with God akin to those which came to the Master when he was baptized in the river Jordan. (Matt. 3:13-17.)

INSTITUTION OF THE SUPPER.

Time: Close of Christ's ministry in person on earth.
Place: The Upper Room in Jerusalem.
Occasion: To take the place of Old Covenant and certify the New.
Elements: Out of the common things of life that they might always have them. Bread and wine.
Described: Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22: 14-20.
Given by Jesus himself in special word to Paul: 1 Cor. 11:24-26.
Frequency: Each Lord's Day.

TEMPER OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Humility and service—Christ washed the disciples' feet. John 13:4, 5.
Brotherhood and equality. Luke 22:19-26.
Obedience and loyalty. "Do this in remembrance of me."
Love and constancy. "He loved them unto the end."
Peace and hope. "Let not your heart be troubled." "In my Father's house are many mansions."
Faith in God and Christ. "Believe in God, believe also in me."
Prayer and consecration, as in John, 17th Chapter.

REVELATIONS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Seen in "Table Talk" of the Master recorded in Gospel of John, Chapters 14, 15, 16.
Christ's revelation of heaven. John 14:1-3.
Christ's self-revelation. John 14:6.
Revelation of the Holy Spirit. John 14:16-18.
Revelation of expediency of Christ's death. John 16.
Union of Christ with his followers. John 15:1-5.
Revelation of Christ's Love. John 15:13.

ASSURANCES OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Sealing of the new covenant.
The perpetuity of his saving power.
The certainty of his presence.
The certainty of his return.
Participation in the mystery, wonder, greatness and glory of the eternal atonement.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LORD'S SUPPER, THE LOVE ORDINANCE

THE sacrament, or ordinance, of which we are about to speak, which is observed every Lord's Day in the churches at public worship, by eating a piece of a broken loaf, and drinking of the blood of the grape, is called by four wonderful names.

Names by Which Known

It is first known in the New Testament as *the breaking of bread.* (Acts 2:42-46.) It is still fittingly so called in many churches. In this supper Christ is our bread of life. The earliest name in Church history is *eucharist.* The word comes from the Greek word *eucharista* and means the giving of thanks. It was based upon the beautiful act of the Master himself, who, as he inaugurated it, gave thanks both for the loaf and for the cup, before partaking of them. (Matt. 26:27; Luke 22:17, 19; 1 Cor. 11:24.) This tender, reverent, humble act of praise and gladness shows the spirit of the Lord's Supper. Besides, the Lord's Table is the place of the broken heart and the contrite spirit; but it is also the place where one overcomes, and rises out of the wreck, with the joy of love and victory upon his lips.

The favorite name of the institution is *The*

Lord's Supper. (1 Cor. 11:20.) It is fittingly called a "supper" or a "meal" because it nourishes the soul of the disciple. It has been said that this was the name of the meal which accompanied the ordinance in the Greek churches, but that view is not strongly supported. It is plain that *Lord's Supper* is a New Testament name. The Supper is also the "communion" because it is the fellowship of the soul with Christ. (1 Cor. 10:16, 17.) This gives it the deepest significance, and the most precious implications. It carries the social idea, as well as the religious, and puts the ordinance in the heart of the worship, as the emblem of reconciliation and brotherhood.

Origin and Perpetuity of the Lord's Supper

The occasion and place of its appointment reach the high water mark of spiritual friendship, of hope, of revelation, and of the assurance of divine forgiveness and love. It was the central fact, and the eternal influence, of the gathering in the Upper Room.

It all bloomed out of the meeting and the hour, as naturally as the unfolding of a blossom. The apostles knew that the time of Christ's departure was at hand, and in the solemn, mystical hour they were engaged in tender and sublime association. They clung close to him in the strange, awful premonition that he was soon to be taken away from them. As they were eating the paschal supper,

Jesus took a loaf and a cup, and declared that they stood for his body and blood, broken and shed for them, and then he fixed the acts of assembly, of breaking bread and drinking the cup, as a perpetual service for the Church.

After his ascension he met Paul somewhere—possibly during his retreat in Arabia (See Galatians 1:11-17) and gave him the ordinance (1 Cor. 11:23). Did he drink of the cup anew with Paul in his kingdom after the fashion of his self-revelation to the disciples in the supper at Emmaus? We cannot tell; but Paul declares that Christ gave it to him to deliver to the churches, to be observed "till he come." Thus the ordinance is of divine origin, and it is for the disciples in all ages, and in all countries, to the end of time (Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20; and 1 Cor. 11:23-25).

In it Jesus touched those chords and impulses that are eternal in the human breast. As long as love lives, the Lord's Supper or its equivalent must abide. Probably the 14th chapter of John, and possibly the 15th and 16th were his table talk at the first communion. Jesus revealed the glory of the Father's house, and pointed the way to it. He promised "another comforter," the Holy Spirit, and he declared that he was so close to his disciples that they were his friends, and that they depended upon him as the branches upon the vine

for life and fruitage. His intercessory prayer (John 17) reveals the sentiments of unity that flow out of the Lord's Supper.

Not one soul there would ever want to forget that meeting in the Upper Room; and its flavor, sentiment, tenderness, and beauty have been perpetuated by this symbolic ordinance through all the centuries since. It has made every place wherever observed an Upper Room. It has made every home more sacred, because the Upper Room was in a private home. It caught the mood of love, the deep purpose of the crimson sacrificial life, and made it possible to reproduce them to the end of time. And it put the radiant hues of the afterglow of life, a touch of the eternal glory, upon the common heart.

The Nature of the Lord's Supper

There has been much discussion on this point, and it has been contended by some that a real miracle, which changes the material elements into the actual body and blood of Christ, takes place in the elements. This view cannot be maintained by the Scriptures. Nor do experience and history support it. Nor is that kind of a miracle necessary to vitalize its power, and enforce its influence over the soul, and over the assembly of the saints.

We are taught by the Scriptures to think of the *Lord's Supper* under four different aspects.

1. The Lord's Supper is a memorial. By it,

memory reflects certain facts. It calls up a great history. "Do this in remembrance of me." Not in memory of the few sweet, illumined, love-gloried, wonderful hours in the Upper Room, but of "me," the Master. It brings before the participant, in addition to the Upper Room—Gethsemane, the judgment seat and the injustice suffered, with that sublime self-mastery, by the Master, at the courts of Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate and Herod; the coarse and cruel treatment by the soldiers; and then the *Via Dolorosa,* and Calvary at last! It whispers to him who partakes of it: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that he should give his only begotten Son to die on the Cross to save us from our sins." There are many wonderful monuments in the world, but none so great as this one, for it calls millions of hearts to memory, to prayer and to love. Says Dr. James I. Vance:

> The Holy Supper tells the story of Christianity in the days of the apostles, and in all days since the apostles, in Christian lands and in all lands, in its apparent defeats and in its unquestioned triumphs, whether regarded as a doctrinal system or a ritual of worship or an ethical revolution or a passion for a person or an enthusiasm for a kingdom. However Christianity may be regarded or estimated or interpreted, its entire story is packed into and inseparably bound up with the simple memorial observance of the Holy Supper.

2. The Lord's Supper is a communion. In the observance of it we get fresh contacts with Christ.

We experience the Master's presence anew. As he gave the emblem he said: "I shall no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." (Mark 14: 25.) This idea is emphasized by Paul. He says: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10:16.)

The power of the Lord's Supper was not exhausted in that Upper Room long ago. Millions of upper rooms have come since where the table is spread. Christ's presence and deathless love are again made real in the heart's satisfactions, in the sense of forgiven sins, and in the conscious peace and exaltation that steady the soul and sing in the bosom. The Supper tells us and we come to know for ourselves, that He lived not alone in the long ago, but that He is alive today, and to live forever more. It is essential Christianity to have this personal relationship with the Master. This is why the Lord's Supper has power to purify the worldly, to comfort the sad, to reveal to the slow of heart, to inspire the discouraged and to unite the estranged. In one of George Macdonald's beautiful stories, the Highland mystic had a passion to see God. He had sought him in sunlight and in moonlight, in the mountain and by the sea, but without satisfaction. But one day

in the communion they saw his face glow, and heard him say softly: "Father o' Lights." The vision had come as he partook of the Lord's Supper. Macdonald's parable is true.

3. The Lord's Supper is a fellowship. It has great social power and influence. It binds together by the power of the living Christ all those who say of Him, "My Lord and my God." On the night of its origin, the disciples came into the Upper Room full of worldly ambition, of petty jealousy and of selfish pride. They did not want to wash each other's feet, and each one sought the place of highest honor. But in the Supper they became reconciled to each other. A man who has sin in his heart, or lives in wrong toward his fellowman, does not find the Lord's Table a comfortable place. The hour was too holy for Judas and he went out into the night. The sinful heart must either repent and forsake sin at the Lord's Table, or else its possessor must go away altogether. The signs of backsliding are first felt and revealed at the Lord's Supper.

At the Lord's Table all are equal. There are no reserved seats. The poor may rejoice that he is exalted—the rich that he is made low. And this spirit of fraternity does not stop at the church door. It is not left in the sacred place. It gets out into life and sets the spirit of charity, of broth-

erhood, of kindness, of sacrificial love to work. It is not only fraternalizing the Church—it is fraternalizing society. Doubtless the Lord's Supper will play a great part in the reunion of the churches.

4. The Lord's Supper is a covenant. As the Master gave the cup to his disciples he said: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you." (Luke 22:20.) Perhaps nothing deeper, or more touching is said about this ordinance of the heart than these words of the Master. It is as if he said the new covenant which binds man to God and to Jesus Christ and which binds man to man is sealed in blood. Love can go no further than this and it is impossible that the divine love for man should be more tenderly, more appealingly, more awfully, or more profoundly expressed than by the blood of the Master's heart. What a cup of life this communion cup is! When the men of Scotland were herded in the yard of the old Greyfriar's church in Edinburgh on account of their loyalty to their faith, they made a covenant and signed their names in the blood drawn from their own veins that they would stand firm to the end. It was the seal of an oath that made history. The perpetual observance of the Lord's Supper is the perpetual renewal of our covenant oath with God in His presence and in the presence of that which symbolizes the Blood

of the Covenant. How wonderful to partake of the Lord's Supper!

5. The Lord's Supper is prophetic. "As often as ye eat this bread and drink the cup ye proclaim the Lord's death *till he come.*" (1 Cor. 11:26.) The Master himself said in his talk at the first communion (St. John, 14th chapter): "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself." Thus, the Lord's Supper symbolizes a great history, gives a deep experience, vitalizes the passion of brotherhood, reminds us of our covenant of loyalty and speaks a wonderful prophecy. *Baptism prophesies the resurrection of the dead; the Lord's Supper prophesies the eternal communion.* That which the soul draws from the Lord's Supper abides forever, and communion in eternity will be a face to face experience without the need of interpreting symbol.

The celebrated and deeply spiritual English minister, Phillip Doddridge, who wrote some of our finest hymns, once dreamed that he had been called from earth into the Father's house of many mansions. In the midst of its indescribable and satisfying splendors he was shown a door over which gleamed his own name in letters of gold. He entered and saw the walls covered with pictures of scenes in his own life on earth. One interested him above all others. It was the picture of an incident in his own childhood. He had been

thrown from a horse upon a jagged pile of rocks. It had always caused wonder that he was not killed by the fall. The picture explained it. There were angels whose arms held him up and prevented the fall from dashing out his life. While looking at this picture in gratitude and amazement, as we shall view the miracles and mercies that guard our lives here below when we reach the celestial land, the Master came in bearing in his hands a cup of gold set with jewels and chased with wonderful clusters of grapes, glowing with the light that was never on land or on sea. The Master drank from the cup and handed it to him. He was about to drink the blood of the grape anew with the Savior in his eternal Kingdom. Then after the fashion of dreams he awoke. His soul was exalted with a great ecstasy and it was long before the spell of it passed from his spirit.

Whatever the second coming of Christ may mean, the Lord's Supper includes the idea of it. Christ will come again without sin unto salvation —he is coming again—he is here; but there will doubtless be a grand climax to history. We bring this before us in the weekly communion service and write it more deeply upon our hearts each time. that we shall see him face to face and know even as also we are known. To have this thought stirring anew in our hearts every week with power

and action is enough to give us the victory over the flesh, over the tempter and over time itself.

Frequency of the Lord's Supper

Oft repetition does not make the Supper "common" and dispel its power. Like prayer, like reading, like converse with our friends, it becomes more to us each time it is observed. At first the Supper seems to have been observed daily (Acts 2:42, 46) in private homes. It made these forever consecrate to the love that lays down life for its friends. No place seems more appropriate to have a Church than in the home and the Lord's Supper is peculiarly fitting there. Every home ought to have an Upper Room which looks out into the home eternal. And "there is no place like home" when it has such a room.

Holding the Supper daily seems soon to have been discontinued and it became a weekly observance. However the New Testament lays down no law except that which may be inferred from the example of the apostles and the history of the early Church. These show that the communion was repeated at least once a week. (Acts 20:7.)

It is most desirable that it should be celebrated often. That deepens its hold upon the heart and fixes it in the habit of pure thought and noble practice. It exalts life and puts the purpose of righteousness into daily conduct. In Pliny's "letter" or report to Emperor Trajan he says that the

custom of the Christians was to meet early in the morning on "a fixed day" and sing hymns to Christ as God, and bind themselves by a *sacramentum* to commit no crime. It is a thrilling idea to believe that perhaps with every heartbeat somebody, somewhere in the world is observing this great feast of love, of life, and of eternity; and that this has been so during the millennia of Christian history. It gives us the sense that the whole race is the family of God—some of them away from home but being brought in by the shepherd quest of the Great Elder Brother.

Who Should Partake of the Supper

The New Testament allows each individual to decide this for himself. "Let a man examine himself and so let him eat and drink." Whoever is following Jesus, as well as he is able, in love and sincerity; whoever is fighting against his sins and seeking to subdue all to Christ has the privilege of the Table. It is for all the weary and heavy-laden who seek the Savior's peace. It is for the disconsolate and lowly. It is for the wounded and broken-hearted. It is for little children and tired mothers. It is for those who have broken their lances in the joust of life and have come in defeated, subdued and disheartened. It is sunset and evening star to the aged. It is for all those who seek the homing heart of the Master who himself had not where to lay his head. It is for all

those who hunger and thirst after God and heaven.

The test for participation is whether one "discerns the Lord's body"—whether one is performing it with single and true heart as that which symbolizes and seeks Christ alone. The Supper can be forfeited in many ways but as long as faith and love and hope intentionally, gladly, intelligently awake and see Christ in the Supper one may partake of it and be assured that he is accepted in the beloved. To partake of it without thinking of Christ, to partake of it simply as a "church ordinance," to partake of it because it is a custom or is expected of us, is to miss its depth and to eat of nothing but bread, to drink of nothing but the blood of the grape. We should not put the right to partake of it on the ground of fitness but on the ground of one's need of Christ, and on the ground that Christ is seeking his disciples.

The Lord's Supper and Character

We shall recapitulate the ideas, aims and purposes of the Lord's Supper as we show its relation to character. It is an edifying, that is to say a *building* ordinance and its creations are more beautiful than all the works and arts of man. Undoubtedly the ordinances belong to God's methods of working in us to our eternal salvation.

According to Jesus Christ everything in Christianity is to be judged by what it does for the individual man and through him for the collective

man which we call society. Jesus taught us that all ordinances, institutions, doctrines and practices are for the sake of man. "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath." This seems to us pre-eminently true of the institution of the Lord's Supper, which we have learned to think of as the love ordinance.

The experience of the Lord's Table seems to linger in the memory longer and with more tenderness than almost anything else connected with Christianity and church life. This is no doubt because it brings one face to face with the Master in a true, mystical way. It proves his omnipresence and through it each soul becomes joyfully convinced that he is alive and to live forever more. So when other lights fail, and other experiences fade out of the heart, this one abides, like the afterglow of a glorious sunset, to comfort the mourner, to cheer the discouraged, and to assure us that the night will not be forever, that morning waits to return with the freshness of eternity.

The writer was once called to a hospital to talk with a woman who had slipped so far over the brink that most sights and scenes of this world had receded beyond the line of memory. Trying to tell me her church connections, she said with labored but happy words, "I am a member—of—that—church where they bring

you—the—emblems every Sunday." She closed her eyes. She remembered the white lily of eternal love that blooms in the Lord's Supper. She touched it. Her Lord was not far away. The emblems had led her to Him.

There is not a fine thing in the human heart that is not stimulated by partaking of it because there is not a flower of love and sacrifice in the heart of God that does not blossom red in this central institution of the religion of Jesus Christ. It feeds the life on all that we cherish as of supreme worth. It incarnates a wonderful history, it keeps alive a profound experience, it rouses the heart to vivid hope by the golden prophecy of the second coming of our Lord. "He died for me, he lives for me, he is coming again for me," the heart keeps singing while the Holy Grail of the Eternal Atonement is pressed to his lips.

It develops forward-looking men. It fosters optimism. It kindles the fires of hope and good cheer in the soul of man. Can a man be a pessimist who partakes of the Lord's Supper? For, beyond and above the dark outline of the hills of time, he will see the light that breaks from heaven's dawning morning and while others still stand in the shadows of night his face will be radiant with the coming day.

BACKGROUNDS AND HORIZONS

THE FIRST LORD'S DAY IN HISTORY.

(a) At morning. Matt. 28:1-15; Mark 16:1-13; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-18.
(b) At evening. Mark 16:12, 13; Luke 24:13-49; John 20:18-25.

THE SECOND LORD'S DAY IN HISTORY.

Mark 16:14; John 20:26-29.

FIFTH LORD'S DAY IN HISTORY. (Probably.)

Acts 2:1-47.

A THRILLING LORD'S DAY. (An Opinion.)

Acts 12:5-19.

ANOTHER LORD'S DAY EVENING.

Acts 20:7-12.

DUTIES OF THE LORD'S DAY.

1 Cor. 16:1, 2; Acts 20:7; to be read in connection with 1 Cor. 11:23-29.

A WONDERFUL LORD'S DAY.

Rev. 1:9-20. This book of marvellous vision, optimism, movement and spiritual dynamic may be looked upon as a Lord's Day vision. All civilization could be quickly transformed by the right use of the Lord's Day.

CHAPTER IX

THE LORD'S DAY AND ITS VALUE

ACCORDING to the New Testament life is a trust. Everything must be dedicated to God and managed for his purposes in the service and elevation of mankind. All ordinances, institutions and redeemed lives must be used to express witness of God, to convey blessings and to help bring the kingdom of God to earth. To such end space, institution and time must be dedicated. As an earnest of it all we have the consecrated place, the Lord's house; the consecrated institution, the Church; and the consecrated time, the Lord's Day. In this chapter we are to think of the consecrated time which we call the Lord's Day.

Why Called the Lord's Day

There is something in a name, especially in what gives it and what it counts for after it has been given. The Lord's Day is called by some "the Sabbath," thus accommodating the Jewish name to the Christian fact. Sometimes it is called "Sunday," thus using the old pagan name for the new Christian idea. It is also called "the first day of the week," after the reckoning of the Jewish calendar, thus making Judaism own the Lordship of

Christ. But in the Christian schedule of time it is properly known as the Lord's Day.

There is a special and dramatic reason why it was called the Lord's Day. In the Roman empire during the early days of Christianity, they had "the Emperor's Day." The Roman Emperor had been deified by the superstitious, ignorant and incompetent people. The Caesars had apparently crowded out the gods and taken unto themselves divine honors. There was an attempt to make Caesarism a religion and the religion of the world at that. The disciples of Christ refused to acknowledge such honor to the Roman Emperors. They put the name of Christ above every name and bowed to him alone as Lord and God. Hence over against this emperor's day, and in defiance of it, they had a day which was to them, and has been ever since, "the Lord's Day." This is a beautiful, religious, descriptive and Scriptural term for this pearl of days as we shall see in studying its origin.

The Origin of the Lord's Day

While the Lord's Day partakes of the principle of the Sabbath, the day upon which God rested after creation, the national day of rest among the Jewish people, and their sacred day, it is distinctly a different day, conveying a different purpose and having a different spirit. While it still carries the idea of mercy and good works, there is nothing of

hardness or repression in it. It was to be a day of freedom and of joy from the first. The spirit of the Lord's Day is not the old spirit of Jewish rules but the new spirit of Christian inspiration. It continues all the economic values of the Jewish Sabbath with the added spiritual values of witness to Jesus Christ. St. Paul calls the Sabbath day "a shadow of things to come" and says that "the body is of Christ" (Col. 2:16, 17).

The beginning of an entirely new conception and use of the sacred day is to be found in the teachings of Jesus Christ himself. When he was accused of working on the Sabbath he said, "My Father worketh even until now and I work" (John 5:17). He also declared "the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath." The Sabbath day was never abrogated by special command or enactment. There was no need that it should be. It gradually decomposed only to recompose as the Christian day as indicated above. The Sabbath day passed into the Lord's Day—after the same fashion that many lower things of the old dispensation were lifted to a higher plane and transfigured with a new glory in the Christian dispensation. The death of Christ brought a new era which cancelled the ordinances and festivals of the old Jewish era. (Colossians 2:14, 15.)

The change from Sabbath to Lord's Day came by the example and practice of the early Chris-

tians. They kept the first day of the week as their holy day. (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2.) It was no doubt first suggested by the things which came to pass on the first day of the week. The chief, stupendous, creative, and revelatory powers of Christianity were on that day made history. Jesus Christ arose from the tomb on the first day of the week and appeared to Mary and the disciples at Emmaus. Seven days later Jesus met with his disciples in the Upper Room on the first day of the week. This shows that there is regard for times and seasons and times and places with Jesus Christ. Pentecost came on the first day of the week. Jesus Christ appeared to John on the Lord's Day, when he was in exile in "the isle called Patmos" and revealed to him his eternal glory and made known the fact that he works in this world through the churches. Thus again the first day of the week was honored and marked out as the Christian's sacred day. It is, for the first time, written down as the Lord's Day in the book of Revelation. (Rev. 1:9-20.) From the way in which John spoke of it, it must have been commonly so recognized by the Church. On the first day of the week, the Lord's day, Paul met with the disciples at Troas and preached until midnight.

These things show that as God blessed and hallowed the seventh day for the Jews, Jesus Christ

consecrated and glorified the first day for his Church, and it became their day of rest and worship—a day forever fragrant with the spices brought to the tomb by the holy women; forever a fresh beginning, bright with the thought of strong, radiant angels; and forever calm and sweet with the sense of the Great Presence; forever glorious with the message that the power of death is broken; and that Jesus is alive and to live forevermore (Rev. 1:18). Strange indeed, it would have been had not the day been adopted as the Church's holy day. Tertullian, one of the greatest early churchmen, sums up the matter by saying: "We keep the first day of the week as the Sabbath, instead of the seventh, because our Lord arose from the dead on that day" (about 195 A. D.).

We are to regard the day as of divine origin, with all spiritual purpose and value for man. But it was never imposed upon man as an obligation. It was offered to him as a blessing and as an expression of God's love and grace. It conveys the idea that God is seeking the fellowship of man and thus it puts upon all Christians the greatest of all obligations—the obligation to meet God's offer, to show an exalted spirit, and to seek those things which are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. To be trusted to do right without a mandatory obligation puts one under the

strongest obligation of all. It challenges his honor, his gratitude and his loyalty.

The Object of the Lord's Day

The Lord's Day was given to satisfy the physical, social and spiritual needs of man. Our Master settled that in the principle enunciated concerning the Jewish Sabbath by which he rescued it from the mass of traditional regulation which had obliterated its true purpose. He said: "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath." As absolute necessity required, the Sabbath might be "broken." The law of the need of humanity takes precedence over all other laws. This idea can be easily abused but it cannot be abused without harm to him who does so and without hurt to the Church, the home and society in general.

Physical Blessings of the Lord's Day

No influence of Christianity bears more or richer blessings to the individual and society than the Lord's Day. It ministers to man's physical need. It gives rest from toil and renews his springs of energy. The bow that is always bent loses its elasticity and its efficiency. It cannot send the swift arrow singing to its work and will finally snap long before the end of its possible term of life. It is thus with the man who never stops to rest. He becomes stolid, his work is poor, and freshness and

power pass away from his mind, heart and body. The Lord's Day restores man and keeps him eager and fit. It adds beauty to youth, vigor to manhood, and sweetness to old age.

The economic value of the Lord's Day makes it an obligation upon all people. It prolongs life and makes work joyful. It helps to make a sturdier and healthier race. The French people are smaller than the other European peoples except in Southern Italy, which has been ruined by war—and is facing obliteration in the course of a few centuries unless some wise thinker finds a way to overcome its decay. It is nervous, excitable and ever ready to break into disorder. This is due in large measure to the destruction of the Lord's Day, to wine and to immorality. When France took the Lord's Day away from her people she gave the nation a blow from which it has never recovered. One of the mightiest aids in making the greater race for which we wait is the Lord's Day. In our own country, a good degree of our labor trouble is caused by ignoring the claims of this day. Men cannot work all the time without dangerous discontent.

We can do more and better work in six days than in seven. When work becomes irksome it is poor in quality and less in quantity. Money made by unnecessary work on the Lord's Day is "ill-gotten gain." It is peculiarly degraded and evil

because it comes as the result of robbing men of their God-given rights of freedom and rest. In many instances the curse of blood rests upon money so made because it is the result of exploiting helpless men, women and children.

The Lord's Day ministers to man's happiness. What a drudgery life would be if there were not one day to lift up the back, tired and bent from toil. The man who has no Lord's Day finally loses the sense of freedom in the petty and galling tyranny of little things. Such a man is in a bondage as bitter as chains. The spirit of the Lord's Day should be a glad, though not a trivial spirit. If there were not a day of rest, of recreation, of freedom from business responsibility, there would be little happiness in most lives and none at all in some lives. Humboldt very truly said: "It is as unreasonable as it is inhuman to work beyond six days weekly."

Social Blessings of the Lord's Day

The Lord's Day affords opportunity for social improvement. It ought to be used to strengthen the ties that bind families together. Parents and children should know one another, and the love that makes the most beautiful institution in the world is made sure by association. In some families the members are strangers to one another. All week the father is at business, the children at school and the mother alone. Then college days come and that

is the virtual separation and scattering of all from the home roof. Well for a family if in the times when it is possible they come to know each other fully and sympathetically. The Lord's Day affords the best opportunity for this. It may thus help to bring the world of which Frances E. Willard dreamed—a world full of happy homes.

The Lord's Day should be a day of loving kindness to the sick. Hospitals can be visited and flowers, the language of sentiment and love, be given to cheer and comfort the afflicted. Neighbors and friends may be drawn together. Probably most of the good deeds that will put people on the right hand in the day of judgment are done on the Lord's Day. (Matt. 25:31-46.)

3. Above all, the Lord's Day is intended to be a day of fellowship with God. This should be first of all a personal matter. Of course, every day ought to have its devotions—its "God's Minute," but it is necessary to give much time to the cultivation of one's soul. There is a personal relationship which each one sustains for himself with God. The Lord's Day affords the best chance to fulfill that high duty to one's self. The soul must have its still times. "Be silent to God—let him mould thee." With such hours may come an exaltation that will conquer circumstances and enable the soul to explore the infinite.

St. John, the divine, was in the spirit on the

Lord's Day and got the vision of the eternal Christ, heard voices of song and teaching, and renewed his courage by coming to know that Christ was in the midst of his Church—as the light in the candlestick—and, therefore, that the Church would go on conquering and to conquer until the New Jerusalem was fully come down from God out of heaven. That is the central idea of the Book of Revelation which is a Lord's Day vision. What mattered it to the old apostle of love that he was shut up in the little isle? The vision revealed to him Christ going forth conquering and to conquer until all evil was overcome and the kingdoms of this world made the kingdom of heaven. This made him strong, patient, undespairing and invincible. It made his soul master of time, things and circumstances. It is one of the purposes of the Lord's Day so to gird and renew men's souls.

The spiritual idea of the Lord's Day is also fulfilled in part by taking account of one's obligation to God. This may be inferred from the statement: "Upon the first day of the week let each one lay by him in store as he may prosper." This direction was given in reference to a collection that was being made in the church at Corinth for the poor saints in Jerusalem. (1 Cor. 16:1, 2.) But there is a permanent and universal principle involved in it. It suggests that those who have been blessed with money should meditate upon what

they owe to God. That requires review of one's successes and failures in life and of one's dependence upon God. It means that the Lord's Day must be used by us as a time when we by definite thought and decision consecrate our money and our lives to God.

What a great revolution it would work in most lives if every Lord's Day morning before "the Sunday paper" has blunted the feelings by its material fascinations men would reverently examine themselves to see how their bank accounts stand in the sight of God—what they owe him and what they should give to the Church, what indeed they should do with their money week by week as they earn it. That would double their power and joy and make their money a source of happiness to themselves and to the world.

The Lord's Day is church day. It is appointed for a day of witness-bearing. It is a day for getting acquainted with one's friends religiously. The apostles and the apostolic churches met each Lord's Day to break bread. The Lord's Day is set for communings in the sanctuary. The Lord's Table is spread and we are to partake of it. This practice was part of the secret of the wonderful power and progress of the early Christians. The practice was so widespread and persistent that the celebrated Greek preacher Chrysostom called it *dies panis* or "the day of bread." On that day

also the Word is preached that our souls may live. Every Christian should assemble with his fellow Christians. This makes the Lord's Day a perpetual witness to the reality of Christ and the love of God in the hearts of men. What a wonderful witness to the power of religion it is when millions of little children, and millions of men and women rise up and go to church on this "welcome, delightful morn." It is living witness to Christ's Lordship and his Saviorhood and no one can think about it and not be impressed. Without the Lord's Day people would soon become selfish, the world would go back to paganism and mankind be smothered with materialism. If we stop to commune with God one day of the week, we shall not forget him the remaining six.

A Great Christian Opportunity

The Church has no greater opportunity than that of the Lord's Day. "Without the Lord's Day, the centuries never could have passed down to us that vivid memory of Jesus which is still the world's supreme incentive to nobility, and by neglecting that day we dim his memory for the generations to come." Voltaire is quoted as having said: "There is no hope of destroying the Christian religion so long as the Christian Sabbath is acknowledged and kept by men as a sacred day."

The Lord's Day should therefore be used industriously, energetically, religiously for the benefi-

cent ends that bless humanity with larger love for man and God. The fact that the wheels of industry, for the most part, cease their noise and release millions to leisure is not only an enforcement of the gospel the Church preaches but it affords a chance to get at men, women and children with the words of life. To allow the day to become littered and clogged with worldly things, or taken up with coarse pleasures and grovelling quest of money is to poison life at its fountain and to cause the deterioration of personal, home and national character. The Church can make little progress without this day, and all the finer Christian feelings will become blunted if it is not properly observed. The Lord's Day is a test of character and a builder of character and we rise or fall according to the way we use it. This was the view of Abraham Lincoln, who said: "As we keep or break the Sabbath we nobly save or meanly lose the last hope by which man rises." Philip Schaff, a great Christian scholar, said: "Next to the Church and the Bible, the Lord's Day is the chief pillar of society."

We must guard the day as the bulwark of our liberties, the spring of our sweetest delights, the constructive power of our highest character and the temple day in which we get new and inspiring visions of God the Father and Jesus Christ the Lord.

WHAT JOINING THE CHURCH MEANS.

A personal action.
A mystical experience.
A divine reception.

THE NECESSITY OF JOINING THE CHURCH.

For self-preservation.
For completion of Christian personality.
For enrichment of experience.
For happiness.
For discipline.
For power.
"Nature is completed by man; man is completed by fellowship."

THE PREPARATION FOR JOINING THE CHURCH.

Knowledge of God and Christ.
Faith in God and Christ.
Conversion.
Renunciation of the world.
Desire to be more like Christ.
Intention to serve Christ and practice brotherhood.

HOW TO JOIN THE CHURCH.

Set forth chiefly in the Book of Acts.
By obeying from the heart that form of doctrine which had been given them. Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 2: 36-47; Acts 8: 26-39; Acts 9:1-19; Acts 10:34-48; Acts 16:13-15, 23-34; Acts 18:5-11; Romans 6:4-8; Gal. 3:26-29; Col. 3:1-17.

CAN ONE BE SAVED WITHOUT JOINING THE CHURCH?

That is in the hands of God.
But why should one desire to stay out of the church?
The church is essential or Christ would not have established it.
A true church is an earnest of heaven.
The church on earth fits men to enter "the church of the firstborn in heaven."

CHAPTER X

JOINING THE CHURCH

IT will be useful to study the question of joining the church. By the church we here mean the local church, the successor to the kind of church described in the New Testament. It is necessary to emphasize this idea in order to correct certain loose notions that have crept into the general way of thinking about the church and membership in it.

One may hear men say that they believe in Jesus Christ but that there is no necessity for the Church. "My religion is between God and myself," "I can worship without the Church," are expressions oft heard today. The secretary of a labor organization said to the writer: "Jesus Christ is all right but I have no use for the Church." We also often hear that one can be as "good out of the church as in it." And that erroneous thought, so disrespectful to Jesus who built the Church, who loved it, and who gave himself up for it, soon becomes the conviction that one can live a better life out of the Church than he can as a member of it. This is more than the self-righteousness of the egotistic natural man; it is the Pharisaism of Satan.

All arguments against joining the church will

vanish away when one considers fully what it means to be a member.

What It Means to Join the Church

To join the church is to make definite enlistment in this local body by an overt act, by a visible alignment with others who have dedicated their lives to the laws of the Master. It is to agree to the doctrines and ideals of the church, to submit to its initiatory act, to adopt its standards of life, and to covenant to enter into the works and responsibilities and aims of the organization. It is a covenant of brotherhood and the establishment of communion with God. It is the investment of life with a great loyalty. To join the church is to matriculate in Christ's school and to enlist in Christ's service. It is to put one's self at Christ's command.

Why Join the Church

1. Because it is God's way of saving his children and of building up the new humanity. "The Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved." (Acts 2:47.) People were not only called to a confession of faith but to a commitment of life, which is seen and certified by joining the church.

2. One joins the church for the sake of Christ. It was his way. He said, "I will build my church." Those who refuse to join the church,

really, therefore, refuse to let Christ have his way with them. Jesus wanted his followers to confess him before men. (Matt. 10:32, 33.) There is something in it precious to him and it is the chief way of testifying for him. To want to be a Christian and remain out of the church looks too much like wanting Christ's blessings, but denying Christ himself. If we love Christ we will join his band of disciples. What an awful hour that was when Peter denied being with him. (Matt. 26:69-75.) But no worse than denying his people today.

3. One should join the church for the sake of the community and of the men and women who do not know how to manage their lives. One socializes his personal, religious experience, when he joins the church. He makes his faith a fact and a force. He is glad to take a step in which he would have others follow him. Somebody is always waiting to see what you will do in order that he may be able to decide what to do. The man who wilfully and carelessly stays out of the church is the greatest stumblingblock in the world. The man who refuses to join the church refuses to light the lamps of the temple that will show men the path of life. The man who keeps out of the church lives in the jungle and helps to obliterate the trail which leads to the city of God.

4. One joins the church for his own sake. No man can do great things without the help of others.

To join the church is to get the strength and life of all poured into one's own personal power and feeling. One will learn more at school than in solitary study. It takes the influence of others to keep up our own enthusiasm. Joining the church takes the indefiniteness out of life. It tends to deliver us from desultoriness. It puts one in a flock where he is safe. Indefinite people are always in peril. Vague goodness finally fades out entirely and then becomes easy sport to temptation. Joining the church commits one openly to the practice of his own convictions, and lets his neighbors know exactly what he would do with his life. It gives point to his purpose.

And the way to get fulness of joy out of one's religion is to join the church and fulfil its life. Spiritual isolation is the worst of all loneliness and the most dangerous. Edward Rowland Sill, speaking of his spiritual aloofness wrote to a friend:

> For my part I long to "fall in" with somebody. This picket duty is monotonous. I hanker after a shoulder on this side and the other.

For power, for influence, for convictions, for safety, for joy one should join the church.

5. Religion would die out in this world without an organization to foster it and to promote it. If there were no organized government, there would be no patriotism. The man without a country

would have nothing to love. The church visualizes religion, and makes it a force to be seen and felt. It has been the mightiest power for good that ever entered the arena of time. But if all the early Christians had been like the rich young ruler who was asked to follow Christ and would not do so, there would never have been a church at all. Without a church religion could not have been propagated.

Who Is Fit to Join the Church

Perhaps no one pushes the idea to its fullest implications. But that is the wrong way to look at it. We need the church more in our weak, crude, undeveloped hours, than in our strong, ripe, matured hours.

There are many things to believe and to resolve when one would be fit to join the church, but these are all such as the conscience approves and all good men applaud.

The following general statement of fitness to join the church from "Outlines of Social Theology" by William DeWitt Hyde, is good:

> Membership in the church is the privilege of all who accept the will of the Father as the rule of their lives; who acknowledge Christ as the revealer and interpreter of the Father's will; and who receive the Spirit of love as the substance of the new life in which the will of the Father and the example of the Son is to be reproduced in themselves.

That is, one is fit to belong to the church if he believes in God, accepts Christ and receives the Holy Spirit.

One should believe in the Bible when he joins the church, for the Bible is the rule of faith and practice for the church. One is fit to join the church when he gives up his life to Christ and wishes to follow him. It is not a question of the degree of one's goodness when he would join the church, but of his love of God, his passion for Christ, and his love of the brethren. One must be willing to be a spiritual democrat and to practice brotherhood toward the weakest and lowliest.

Speaking in a special and specific way—one is fit to join a church when he believes in the beliefs of the church, when he is in agreement with its practices, customs, ideals and interpretations and when he is willing to share its burdens and responsibilities. One is never fit to join a church until he is willing to come in by the church's way instead of dictating his own.

One is fit to join the church when he wishes to do so in order to be part of the big, world-inclusive programs of the church.

How to Join the Church

Nothing is more important than that we understand this point. We are all proud enough to want to invent our own way into the church. But there are very open and definite steps to be taken.

One does not merely drift into the church. He is not a member of the church simply because he is a good man. Being born of Christian parents does not give one membership in the church. The church is made up of those "who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man but of God." (John 1:13.) Joining the church is a spiritual step that must be prepared for and carried out spiritually. We make the matter too easy, too matter of fact, too materialistic today. Joining the church is not like joining a lodge, or a political party, or a college fraternity. It is a profound spiritual experience, a vast and wonderful spiritual enterprise, an adventure of the soul in the service of the weak, the practice of brotherhood and the worship of God.

1. In order to join the church *one must believe with all his heart that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God,* and openly take him as Master and Lord. Let no one be beguiled into the belief that a mere kindly disposition is enough to entitle him to church membership. He must believe in Christ and trust him as God manifest in the flesh. Belief is a wonderful inner state. It calls out all the energy of the soul and when it becomes faith it polarizes one about Jesus Christ. We come to the church through Christ and not to Christ through the church.

2. The next step is *renunciation.* That means

definite determination to part company with the world. Inwardly it is repentance, outwardly it is reformation. Renunciation means giving up something. It is giving up the lure of the world, the flesh, and the devil. It is a thoroughly misleading and tremendously dangerous deception that there is nothing to give up when one joins the church. The church is both a sacramental and a sacrificial society. It is distinct from the world, and is different. It is the realm in which people live by the spirit and not by the flesh.

There are things known and acknowledged by all to be wrong. These, of course, must be given up in order to join the church.

And sometimes even the good must be given up. That is where *sacrifice* comes in. The lower good must be put away in order that the higher good may come. One might have to give up *business,* which is good, in order to be a minister or a missionary which is a higher good. We may have to abstain from food, or innocent amusements, or visiting certain places for the benefit of our brothers, who cannot do many things we may be able to do, without harm to themselves. We must give up liberty itself, dear as it is to us, for the sake of love.

There are sins of the spirit, sins of society, sins of imagination, sins of the heart to be renounced in order to join the church.

The renunciation may not deliver us at once—but we declare war against our sins and fight it out with them if it takes all the length of life to do so.

One does not have to be good to join the church, but he must be *striving with all his being to grow into goodness*—to grow Godward, to become Christ-like. The church is really made up of men and women who are fighting to overcome themselves and their environment in order to attain unto perfection.

3. The next step is *confession and dedication.* No hour of a man's life is finer than that in which he becomes a confessor of the faith. He puts his life out into the sunlight. Confession was one of the hardest things in the early church. It was the point where men preached their first sermon and where their purposes and intentions became known unto their neighbors and erstwhile friends. In early days, people paid their lives for the privilege of confessing Christ. It does not go as far as that today; but if the confessor is in earnest it will cost something. It is the great hour of adventure in the quest of a spiritual character. One throws himself into the sea of life at the word of Christ.

Confession means that one is willing to pay the price in order to keep his faith in Jesus Christ. There is a wonderful picture which portrays this. It is in the early days of Christianity. The young

and beautiful Roman girl is on trial before the emperor. Her lover stands at her right whispering in her ear. She is being forced to choose between Christ and becoming a vestal virgin in the service of Diana, or Christianity and death. The girl's pure uplifted face foretells her decision. It is her confession of Christ and her renunciation of all that rivals him. In order to join the church one must renounce the world at any cost. That is why it is sublime to be a church member.

4. The crowning act of belief, faith, trust, repentance, renunciation and confession in order to join the church, is baptism. This was always given by the church and accepted by the candidate as the final step into the church. "Baptized into Christ" is the description. "He that believeth and is baptized," said the Master. About 3,000 were baptized on the day of Pentecost and added to the church. There is no record that any one in the apostolic days became a member of the church without baptism.

And baptism was always immersion. Christian baptism is immersion of a penitent believer into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. When one is properly received into the church the final step is being immersed, having had the spiritual preparation and experiences properly leading up to it.

The question has arisen in these days whether

persons who have received affusion as baptism should not be fully accepted in our churches. It has caused much discussion and not a little unpleasant feeling. It is argued by those who advocate it that members in other churches show the fruits of the Spirit and are acknowledged to be Christians—therefore it is claimed, they should be received for the sake of Christian union and fulness of fellowship. This however overlooks too many important points and decides too many things in a summary way. It is based on sentiment and emotionalism rather than on the Scriptures. Christian fellowship and church membership are different. The Disciples fellowship all Christians in many ways; but only a few are willing to do violence to the New Testament way or to the souls of prospective members by inviting them into their churches without immersion. To do this adds to the unhappy divisions already existing and it substitutes the opinion of those who have received affusion for the actual facts and acts required by the New Testament. A New Testament Church should have a New Testament Baptism. The divided church can never be reunited excepting on the words of the Master who built the church and whose it is. When the church leaves immersion it leaves universal ground and therefore commits itself to a divisive position. Besides, "open membership" tends to cultivate

proselyting which degrades him that uses it and him that receives. It is not conceivable that a conscientious person would want to join the church by special concession. One who wishes to be a member should come in the regular way. No man asks a lodge to alter conditions of admission in order that he may join. When a man passes from one country to another he must comply with the conditions of citizenship if he would become a citizen of the new country. We gladly acknowledge the good character of others, but to have received the Spirit and achieved all the Christian virtues does not absolve one from keeping the ritual Christ has established. Jesus never sinned and John thought that on the ground of his perfection he need not be baptized, but Jesus said, "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness," and John baptized him. Cornelius received the Spirit as the apostles had, yet he was required to be baptized for that very reason. The higher one's character the more his obligation to observe all the ordinances. No man ever gets above keeping the forms of worship and religious expression. And no man's character can be so perfect that we would put it against a positive command of Jesus Christ. Christ's word has greater authority than any man's character. A man may be a good citizen but he is not allowed to vote without registering. No candidate can be so intensely and greatly pa-

triotic that he can become president of the United States without taking the oath to uphold the constitution. There should be uniformity and universality in the form of Baptism for the sake of the Church universal. These contentions are fortified, in fact certified by the fact that practically all of the affusionist churches acknowledge the Scriptural validity of immersion as baptism. Therefore no one would violate his conscience to practice it.

By using the Baptism of Christ and his apostles we may establish such a form and then wherever and whenever one sees it enacted, even by people who may not understand the common language of each other, this symbol will be understood. It would of itself be the universal sign that would create a bond of sympathy.

The Greatness of Belonging to the Church

1. In belonging to the church, one has dedicated his life to the highest things known to humanity. He pledges himself to live in the spirit and to lift the world out of the mud as far as his influence goes. And he is helping men to prepare to live forever. There is not a good principle, or passion, or aim of which one is able to think that the church has not championed. Its motto is: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things

are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Phil. 4:8.)

Joining the church is the quest of the beautiful, the true and the good. The church has ever been the champion of fair play. It has kept the golden rule alive in the world. It is a sublime thing and schools one's heart and mind to search only for that which is pure, true and lovely.

2. In belonging to the church one becomes heir to the championship of the great things for which the prophets and apostles lived and died. These great men flung from dying hands the torch of progress and truth and it is a supreme honor to carry it forward. In a true sense the mantle of Elijah and Elisha, Isaiah and Jeremiah, Paul, Peter and John and the martyrs and confessors of the heroic epochs of the church have fallen upon his shoulders. No greater distinction than this could crown one's life. All the best people we have known and know were and are members of the church. The people of sacrifice, of unselfishness, of purity of life, of good works, the people with the light of eternity in their faces are all members of the church. It is a distinction to be even an humble member of such a body.

3. The church is a society of vast and colossal adventure. It is composed of men and women who live and act as seeing him who is invisible. The

church member is part of all the big moral enterprises undertaken in this world. And no matter how important one may seem to be if he is not in the church, he stands outside of the greatest movements of history and of his own times. A simple but interesting incident illustrates this. A bookkeeper who was superintendent of a mission Sunday school became angry with the pastor whose church controlled the mission, and he was about to be dismissed even from this inconspicuous Christian service. But his wife appealed to the pastor to give her husband a chance. She said, "That is the only thing that connects him with the really great things of life. If that is taken away he will sink into nonentity." There was something touching in the appeal but we are here impressed by the idea that church life connects one with the things that matter in this world.

4. The church has had creative power by reason of the eternal truth it proclaims and the life it fosters and the Holy Spirit of God which has been given to it. It has survived the shock of dissolving empires and falling civilizations and today the hope of the world is in what it will do and say. Its missionaries are in every land under heaven and there are no nations or tribes so low that some minister or worker of the church will not carry food, light, instruction, sympathy and love to them.

The church has been fighting the good fight of

faith now for two thousand years and its books contain the names of the greatest men of history. Hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, have been martyred for the sake of its doctrines. It has fought and won all the great moral battles that have marked the progress of the race for the last two thousand years. It has always been found on the right side of every moral question. It has grappled with some of the worst of the destructive forces at work in the world, and brought them under control. Here it is sufficient to say that "the church enforced an ideal of self-mastery, understood at first with special reference to bodily purity, but capable of deeper and wider application; she severely condemned and finally succeeded in suppressing the practice of exposing and abandoning infants; she brought about an effective abhorrence of the barbarism of gladiatorial combats; she produced an immediate moral mitigation of slavery and a strong encouragement to emancipation; and she greatly extended the charitable provision made for the sick and the poor."

Under the church's leadership slavery has passed entirely. By the moral force generated in this country the Louisiana lottery was destroyed, and the saloon has been overthrown in the greatest nation in the world. A new feeling of nation toward nation has been established and so much has the love of man been promoted that the leading nations of the world are ever ready to help the starving and the unfortunate.

There are yet many evils to be destroyed. The "White Slave Traffic," the drug evil that threatens the existence of the race, the brutal prize fight, and the materialism which is corrupting life at its fountain must be put down and it is the altruism and the abhorrence of evil that comes out of the church which has taken up arms against these monsters. All great reforms must eventually come back to the church for moral energy, spiritual interpretation and vital enthusiasm. It is the inspirer and director of social service.

To belong to an organization like that lifts one out of pettiness. The smallest congregation hidden away somewhere in the hills, is a world force that Satan dreads more than an army with banners. When one joins the church he becomes "a consenting and contributing member of that body of Christ whose mighty redemptive ministry is destined at last to fill the earth with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea." Those who refuse to join the church miss the supreme chance of life. They "miss the sunrise."

GOOD CHURCH MEMBER AN IDEAL MAN.

He is living by the best ideas known.
He is associating with the best people known.
He is working to build up the best society known.
He is learning in the best school known.
He is preparing for the best future known.

THE GOOD CHURCH MEMBER DESCRIBED.

Knows his church.
Believes in his church.
Loves his church.
Loyal to his church; honors it.
Co-operates with his church.
Commends his church to others.
Sacrifices for his church:
(a) His pleasure if it causes his fellow members to stumble.
(b) His gifts if they are in want.
(c) His life if they need it.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD CHURCH MEMBERS.

Jesus Christ, the exemplar for all Christians.
Andrew, who won others for Christ.
Paul, who would not cause his brethren to stumble.
John, who counseled laying down one's life for his brethren.

INFLUENCE OF THE GOOD CHURCH MEMBER.

The salt of the earth, the light of the world. Matt. 5:14-16.
The living message of Christianity. 2 Cor. 3:2, 3.
A pillar in the temple of God. Rev. 3:12.

NOTE.—The life of Christ is the example, test and inspiration for the good church member. The epistles especially teach how to cultivate the personal religious life, and how to live in the church. The epistles of James, Peter and John are especially rich in this respect.

CHAPTER XI

A GOOD CHURCH MEMBER

THIS is a question of importance for many reasons. It rebukes those who say: "I am a member of the church, but I do not work at it very hard. I am afraid the pastor would hardly own me as one of his flock." Scarcely would one say this if he reflected at all seriously upon his words. Being a church member is a privilege too high to be treated in such a light manner.

To define or even to describe a good church member is a difficult task. It is not alone to speak of personality but of personality enriched, beautified and enlarged by the redemptive, regenerating influence of Jesus Christ. A good church member is like a cut gem with many facets, every one of which sheds a glory in any kind of light.

About half the New Testament is taken up in teaching the practices and the duties of Church membership. As a general statement it may be said that the four gospels show us in the words and example of the Master what it is to be a Christian and why to become one; the Acts teaches how to become a Christian; the epistles reveal the wonders, the glories, and the demands of church membership; and the book of Revelation forecasts the

victory of right over wrong, the establishment of the Kingdom and the final destiny and glory of the Christian. Of course, all these ideas belong to all the books of the New Testament in a degree—but as a working outline these divisions will be serviceable.

The Church Member Different

There should be a difference between the member of the church and the citizen of the world. The outward difference is not always apparent but it is there, it is inward. Even if the life of the Christian is at times involved in inconsistency, he is still better than the worldly man for he is fighting his sin and his faults and trying to rise above his failures. We have seen church members who seemed far away from the image of Jesus Christ, and yet we have thought of them as heroic because they were fighting for their souls. A church member is to be accounted a good one, even though he may have grave faults, if he is earnestly and zealously striving to overcome his sins. That makes the difference between him and the world and puts him far above it.

Once Sir Walter Scott looked at a picture of Lord Byron. Some one criticised the picture—it was "not like Byron, it lacks lustre." To which Sir Walter replied: "The lustre is there but it is not lighted."

These words are not intended as an apology for

Christians who live below the standard, but rather as an encouragement to them to be good church members by taking up arms against their shortcomings. The world expects more of church members than of itself. Christians should do more than others because more has been done for them. (See Matthew 5:43-48.) They should live above the world, outdo it in forgiving, in loving, in self-sacrifice, in zeal for all that is good. Prof. Glover says in his book, "The Jesus of History," that the early Christians "out-lived" the pagan, "out-died" him and "out-thought" him and he pronounces this "one of the greatest wonders that history has to show." "He came into the world and lived a great deal better than the pagan; he beat him hollow in living." This the good church member is doing all the time. The miracle is daily repeated.

The Best For the Highest

The inspiration for being a good church member is in the thought that one has set his heart on Jesus Christ and wishes to be like him. If there is anything worthy of our best in every way it is the church which the Master founded, which he loves and which he guides. We should give our best for the most worth while. A man should not sell his life cheaply. When Holman Hunt, the celebrated British painter, was a young man he dedicated his life to the motto: "My best for the

highest." He painted many pictures and all of them religious but his supreme achievement was his "Light of the World." He had given the best he had—his ripened, trained, enlarged genius for the highest he knew, the highest any one knows, the highest there is to know—Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God.

A good church member will give his church his life at its best. Too many use their freshest energy and finest thought in their worldly callings or in their pleasures and bring their worn and jaded selves to the services of the church. A good church member will not so dishonor his church. He will put it first and not second.

His Habits

There is an outline of the spiritual exercises of the good church members who lived in the glow of the first beautiful dawn of the day of love in the world, and who therefore became the pattern for church members for all time. It is in Acts 2:42 and reads:

> "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers."

1. From this we reckon that one of the first characteristics of the good church member is constancy. Nor can this be accounted the least of his virtues. He is like the geyser, "Old Faithful," in Yellowstone Park. Others are intermittent and

uncertain but "Old Faithful" comes on the minute and never disappoints. He is the church member the pastor and his brethren "can count on." Constancy in the church means to stand by it. And this is the making of causes. The shifty, fitful member neither gets joy nor power out of the church nor does good with his life. The North Star is apparently not as brilliant as some others but it is fixed and sailors steer their ships by it when it is dark. Constancy proves one's earnestness and shows his faith. This has both steadying and inspirational power. State and Church are built upon dependable men and women. The Master said in one of his letters from heaven: "He who overcomes—I will make him a pillar in the Sanctuary of My God, and he shall never go out from it again. And I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which is to come down out of Heaven from My God, and My own new name." (Rev. 3:12. Weymouth.) We have all heard men and women called "pillars of the church." Greater compliment was never uttered and these are they who eventually attain the highest spirituality—the name of God, the new name of Christ is chased upon their stainless souls by the fire of the Holy Spirit. This shows what a church member may become if he will.

Constancy means keeping on and therefore it

wins the crown when others fail and turn back. Jesus forewarned his disciples that there would be many things to lure them, to tempt them, possibly to make them afraid. He knew how near to falling they would often be but he encouraged them by the promise: "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." Demas is one of the most unenviable characters in the New Testament. "Demas hath forsaken me," said Paul, "having loved this present world." He may have come back to Paul later but his habit of vacillation kept him from being an ideal church member.

2. The good church member according to the specifications in the Acts must be continually a learner. "They continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching." This implies that one must be a perpetual student of the things written and preached by the apostles. The good church member never grows tired of sitting at the feet of the Master, nor of attending his school. He can never get enough of God's word. It is sweeter than honey to him.

The apostles' doctrine or teaching is to be found in the New Testament. The gospels tell us the story of Christ's life on earth and record some of his sayings. The sermons of the apostles and their epistles are drawn from this life, and give explanation and interpretation of it that the saints in all ages may be enlightened, purified and awak-

ened by the Holy Spirit. This was according to Christ's own word in John 16:13, 14: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you."

All this means that a good church member is intelligent in the Word, and in the knowledge of the progress of Christianity in the world. Truth is neither provincial nor static and we must follow it all the time to make ourselves worthy of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

This idea calls us to give heed to the *living word* as it is spoken and taught, printed and written, by God's ministers today. Jesus Christ set up the pulpit as the chief voice of the church. It is for the interpretation of his word and for the admonition of the people. To heed this admonition would require one to attend church regularly, to hear the minister and to improve himself continually by the opportunity offered in the Bible classes of the Sunday school.

The good church member "knows his Bible." The Word is a lamp unto his feet, a light upon his pathway. The pulpit is the tongue that calls him to action and the crimsoned cross is the sacrificial

symbol that goes before him in the great crusade of winning the world for God.

Life must have much more than a good emotion or an honest purpose. It must have a sound, doctrinal basis to make it intelligent, as well as purposeful. There must be light as well as heat, and knowledge as well as feeling. "The apostles' teaching" is the good church member's guide. He must honor his intellect by trusting it and warm his heart in the same way. Christ claims man's intellect. Hence he must have doctrine for his growth and satisfaction. "Love the Lord with all your mind." There is an intellectual hunger as well as a heart hunger. One must see as well as feel.

3. The good church member practices the fellowship.

(a) He is brotherly. He sympathizes with all who are in distress and withholds not his presence, his words, nor his gifts if by them he can bring a little comfort to another.

(b) He is loyal to his brethren. He believes in the "beloved community" and contributes his share to its power and beauty. This forbids the spirit of faction, or schism and the unlovely habit of judging and finding fault. It requires the practice of the 13th chapter of First Corinthians. The true church is organized love and a good member will, like Jesus Christ, love the church and give

himself up for it. We have known men to mortgage their own homes to save the church building. We know one man who endorsed paper for the church till the banks would not lend him money to enlarge his own business. There was a widow and she was highly praised by Jesus Christ because she cast into the treasury all that she had. Thousands upon thousands of martyrs have laid down their lives for the Church.

(c) To this fellowship of the heart must be added the fellowship of the hand. The man who lives right in his church will give full co-operation not only in the public meetings with his fellow-church members but will exercise genuine co-operation in every good work in which his church engages. He will not allow a few men "to do it all." He will be a worker and not stand with his hands in his pockets while others are busy. He will be a soldier and stand up shoulder to shoulder with others who fight for the causes that call for men. He will help lift the loads, carry the burdens and make the great adventures required to Christianize the world.

(d) To the fellowship of the heart, and the fellowship of the hand, the good member will add the *fellowship of the purse.* Every member of the church should help bear his proportionate share of the church's financial obligations. Be it much or little he should give as God has prospered him.

If all were to do this the financial demands of almost any church would be easily, promptly and happily met. Fellowship in the early church went so far as to partake of the wants of the people. No one said aught that he possessed was his own and they sold their goods and parted to each as he had need. The church is fulfilling this in various ways today—chiefly by striving to build a civilization from which poverty is absent. All the charitable institutions are fruits of the Spirit of Christ.

(e) The good church member has fellowship, vote and voice in the management of his church. True fellowship implies democracy and that means that the voice of every member of the church should be heard in some way in every movement of the church. Plans of work and progress should be adopted at public meetings, giving every one a chance to be heard, and then whatever the views held before such adoption, the plans should belong to all after a vote has been reached and a platform fixed. In a true fellowship no one seeks to have his own way. Rather all seek to have the way of Christ and work in that together. That would do away with the disposition to lord it over the church and stop the leakage of power through unreasonable contention and individualism.

4. The good church member is regular at the Lord's Table. There he keeps in tune with the infinite—there he touches and handles things unseen.

The breaking of bread refers to the Lord's Supper, which it seems was at first practiced daily by the early Christians. This did not last long and it became the custom to hold the Lord's Supper on the Lord's day at the weekly meeting of the disciples. We have already discussed the value of this divine appointment for the Christian soul and will not here repeat the discussion. (See Chapter VIII.) Yet at the risk of repetition it seems well to say that no one may misuse or neglect the Lord's Supper without dire spiritual consequences. This ordinance has wonderful power over heart and conscience as is attested by the fact that those who have done wrong generally avoid the Table even though all the time burning within from regret, remorse, and self-reproach. To neglect this feast of the heart is to take the first step backward toward the world. When one does wrong, he should not stay away from the Lord's Supper but repent of his sin and come to the Supper for spiritual strength and renewal.

5. The good church member perpetually practices the presence of God. In this he reaches the high-water mark of the spiritual life. Prayer is experiencing the presence of God. It is "talking to God with all the heart." It is the essence of religion for it throws the soul upon the grace of God in trust and love, expecting forgiveness, help and guidance.

One of the earliest and most pleasing pictures of apostolic practice is seen in Acts 3:1-10. "One day Peter and John were going up to the temple for the hour of prayer," the narrative commences and it ends with the story of a mighty miracle, and a divine sensation in the community. If a church could choose what, above everything else, it would have its members become, it could well afford to choose that they be praying men and women. This is the climax of beauty and power—or let us say —the soul of beauty and of power. A good member is a praying member. First, in the secret places where God alone sees and hears; and then, publicly where his prayer may lift souls less experienced in the divine heavenward. The highest culture is the culture of prayer, as it is the highest power.

The church has never had time nor place nor association that meant more than the prayer meeting. It assures the presence of Christ, becomes the fountain of power, and pours about the gathered worshipers the atmosphere of heaven. The young convert should, at all costs, be regular in some of the prayer meetings of his church. The church which gives up its prayer meeting is committing a sin against its young members. The prayer meeting was the life of even the early apostolic churches. (Read 1 Cor., Chapters 12, 13, 14.)

There is no better type of church member than the praying man. He carries the suggestion of

eternity with him and holds within his soul a conviction of omnipotence. It gives him the sense of the presence and goodness of God and enables him to partake of the riches, the purity and the magnetism of the divine nature.

It was public prayer mentioned in Acts 2:42, and to it came all the Christians that they might light the fires of devotion upon their own altars. It is an education of the soul to be led in prayer by one who knows how to approach the throne of grace. The good church member will never get busy enough to forget to read his New Testament and pray. In this way he always lives by supernatural power.

His Attitude to Life

The ideal church member is an optimist. To say a man is a Christian is to say that he is happy. No one more certainly misinterprets Jesus Christ and his religion than the man of gloomy spirit, and doleful outlook. The Christian life is a new life and its chief note is joy.

One of the strongest contrasts of the Christian of the early days to the pagan was his happiness. He had found the secret of eternal joy and his freedom from care, his ability to meet death with calmness and even with gladness, commended his life to outsiders.

There is no place in which the superiority of church life is more apparent than in the joy that

leaps from the heart and lips of the best type of church member. Faith gives freedom from care. It does not worry. It sings in prison, it sings in the valley and shadow of death. Paul's word was, "Rejoice in the Lord always—and again I say rejoice." He wrote five epistles out of prison but not one of them was sad. They are like a cage of song birds when the sun falls through tree and window.

It is the duty of church members to cultivate a cheerful and contented spirit. There are many things in the church to cause people to be glad: the good news of Christ; the sense of forgiven sin; the warmth and mutual help of fellowship; the honor and dignity of human personality; the discovery of things of eternal worth; and finally the hope of heaven.

He is a Soul-Winner

Every one who comes to Christ has a double call. He is first called to save his own soul and secondly to save the souls of others. In the early church it would seem that every man and woman was a preacher. (Acts 8:4.) "Follower and bringer" might be used as a fitting description of a good member of the church. His ideal is Andrew, who "findeth first his own brother, Simon" and "brought him unto Jesus." (John 1:41, 42.) The motto of the church training its membership thoroughly would be "Every Member a Soul-Winner."

Examples of Good Church Members

The New Testament is rich in the record of ideal men and women. Naturally we think first of the leaders—apostles, evangelists, and preachers. But the list does not stop with these. The common man gets his inning in this new movement. Some of the examples of good church members are as follows: Barnabas, the business man, Acts 4:36, 37; Stephen, the deacon, Acts 6:8; Ananias, of Damascus, the praying man, Acts 9:11-18; Dorcas, the kind-hearted, Acts 9:36-43; Lydia, the religious business woman, Acts 16:13-15; an old roster of great Christians, Romans 16:1-16; Epaphras, a heart at leisure from itself, Col. 4:12, 13; Luke, the beloved physician, Col. 4:14 and the gospel of Luke; Philemon, the host of the saints, Philemon 4-7; a Christian widow, 1 Tim. 5:9, 10; the Elect Lady, second epistle of John; Gaius, the prosperous of soul, third epistle of John; Jesus the Supreme Exemplar of Good Church Members, Mark 7:37; Acts 10:38.

WHAT TO EXPECT OF THE CHURCH.

Many people expect too much of it.
Others expect the wrong thing.
Want the Church to run all the machinery of society, to form and conduct social clubs, gymnasiums, swimming pools, and to provide means of pleasure, for all ages. These things belong indirectly to the duty of the church.

THE TASK OF THE CHURCH.

Task of the Church is a spiritual task.
The Church is the pillar and ground of the truth.
The Church is the medium of God's revelation—by witness bearing.
The mission of the Church is the mission of the Master.
Whatever Christ was and did in the world that the Church is to try to do and be in the world.
To Christianize society. Matt. 28:18-20.
(a) By preaching the gospel to every creature.
(b) By teaching the people to observe the Master's commands.
(c) By baptizing them into the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit.

THE EQUIPMENT OF THE CHURCH FOR ITS TASK.

Firm faith in and sincere love for Jesus Christ.
Leaders, trained, consecrated, and filled with the Holy Spirit.
Schools and colleges.
Suitable architecture.
A sufficient financial budget.
Efficient organization.

THE TASK OF THE DISCIPLES.

The general Christian task.
The return to Christ for doctrine and guidance.
To build a church after the pattern and example of Jesus Christ.
To plead for the union of God's people, on Jesus Christ in the light of the New Testament.
Scripture Golden Texts—Acts 2; 6:1-6; Acts 13:1-3; Romans 12:4-8; 16:1, 2; 1 Cor. 12:4-31; 2 Cor. 8:9; Ephesians 4.

CHAPTER XII

HOW THE CHURCHES WORK

EVERY Disciple should be a member of the church as it is represented in a visible, organized body of people worshiping in a given locality. This local church, commonly so-called, is a very real and practical body. It must have a program, a location, a house, and a vital connection with the community in which it lives and works. It has its inner, confidential, spiritual aspects and its outer, physical and business responsibilities.

The Model for the Churches of Christ

The model for the churches of the Disciples is found in the New Testament. According to this, the local church is a democracy ruled by Christ who is the head, guided in mind by the Written Word and led in the depth of inner experience by the Spirit of God. Being such a democracy, a part of the responsibility for the welfare of the church rests upon every member. In churches founded on the pattern of monarchies, such is not the case. Everything is "handed down" to the members and knowledge of the instruments, the tasks and the methods are not essential. But in the New Testament Church it is

not so. Every member helps to make the atmosphere, to point the direction, to mark the goal and to modulate the pace. Every church is independent and its organization sufficient to build up its own life in faith, hope and love. The Disciples have no "overhead government" and will not have one, believing that this tends to ecclesiasticism, to the suppression of the individual member, to political and mechanical management of the church and to the hindrance of initiative and the entrance of the Spirit. The advantages of the democratic polity are many and great but it also has special dangers and responsibilities. Self-control must reach a very high degree and the church must be well informed or it will go astray.

Responsibilities of Leaders

The leaders of the church must provide the membership with opportunities for a satisfactory degree of intelligence. At annual congregational meetings the plans and purposes for the following year are fixed, officers are elected, and the general outlines of the work made plain to all. Everything should be done in the open and faithful records kept. Where this is neglected the people are left in ignorance and cannot be expected to be zealous. By this lack the church is made weak, and fails to reach its highest goals. Often misunderstandings arise and they cause strife and division. True leaders will always seek to prevent this.

How Duties are Discovered

The duties of the local church are determined in three ways. The first is by the general work of preaching the gospel and training the membership as laid down in the New Testament. The second is the need of the community where the church lives and works, viewed in the light of Christ's teachings and commandments. The third is seen in the larger aims and operations that grow out of the co-operative effort of all the churches that exist and agree to work together in the Brotherhood. In this way each church is enabled to fulfil its mission and to call every member to some work.

The member keeps informed by attendance upon the meetings of his church, by announcements and bulletins, by the visits of evangelists, missionaries and ministers and especially by the religious press, which brings tidings from the field—tidings that mark the progress of his own people—and which also mediate to him and his fellow members the interpretations and tendencies of thought that influence the religious body to which his church belongs.

The Organization of the Church

It is necessary also to know the organization of the church if one is to be a happy and useful member of it. The Church consists of Christ as the head, the officers given by him as leaders and the disciples at large as the body of Jesus Christ.

The church must have officers. A list of these is given in the New Testament. Perhaps the church at Ephesus was the most completely organized and the most richly officered of the New Testament churches. It becomes, therefore, one of our most impressive and instructive models. The officers of this church were considered special "gifts" of the crowned Christ (Eph. 4:8, 11 *et seq.*) to the people. This is the right view of the officers of the church—that they are not of human origin but of divine gift or granting. And Christ never gave his people better gifts than conscientious and capable officers.

Church Officers

The following officials are mentioned in Ephesians: apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers. Their duties in general were to provide for the equipment of the saints, the business of the ministry, the upbuilding of the body of Christ, and the development of individuals to full spiritual stature in Christ. (Eph. 4:11-15.) We also read of "bishops and deacons," (Phil. 1:1; Acts 20:28) and of "elders" (Acts 20:17) and of a "deaconess" (Rom. 16:1). The officers of the church today are evangelists, ministers, pastors or elders, and deacons. The apostolic and prophetic offices prominent in the beginning, the formative period, have been absorbed into these and are ex-

pressed through them in the enterprises and aims of the church.

The Departments of the Church

According to the New Testament, which contains both the model and the norm of the church, there are three general departments of service, and these constitute the framework of all our congregations, no matter what may be their general arrangement and outer form. These departments are the evangelistic, the pastoral and the benevolent. They are enlarged and subdivided as the conditions seem to demand but the ideas contained in them mark the lines of organization for all churches.

All the functions of true church officers as they exist now or have ever existed were discharged by Jesus Christ when he was on earth and the present *organizations are simply the effort to conserve and to distribute the power generated by Jesus Christ and to supply it to society in such a way that it will perpetually work as a regenerating, redemptive force. The true apostolic succession is in the whole Church and not simply in officials and preachers. And it is not a question of orders and ordination but of the stream of life given by God.* It requires all the Church with all its operations to fulfill Christ's work and to convey the influence of his personality in this world. This is all implied in the teaching that the Church is the body of Christ. All offices and powers inhere in Jesus

Christ and are his gifts perpetually renewed and constantly made effective.

Let us consider the three departments of the church, according to the New Testament.

The First Is the Evangelistic

Jesus Christ himself was the first evangelist. Then he sent forth "the seventy" to preach. The apostles were foundation evangelists. Their preaching consisted largely of witness bearing and exhortation. Their chief aim must be the chief aim of the evangelist today, to preach the gospel and to win people to Jesus Christ. They must make the appeal which wins and brings in the outsider. This is the promotion department, the recruiting service of the church. The first work of the church in the order of time was evangelism. The church was born in a revival. It was created and has been built by Jesus Christ, by the influence of the Holy Spirit, through the preaching of the Word.

This also includes pastoral preaching. The man called the "pastor" today is properly the minister, or the evangelist. He exercises the prophetic office (Ephesians 4:11) which includes seeing, foretelling and especially forthtelling. The preacher should get his message from God's word by prayer and study and should proclaim it to the world with the fervor and rapture of the Spirit. This was done on the day of Pentecost.

Under this head also belongs part at least of the "Great Commission," Matt. 28:18-20. The missionary of the cross in foreign lands is pre-eminently the personality of God's evangel. If the evangelist at home is "the herald of a passion," the missionary or evangelist abroad is the preacher of a redemption—the glorious gospel, the light that is sprung up to those who sit in the region and shadow of death. Often the missionary is the martyr of a passion.

Jesus Christ was an evangelist and the first work he inspired in his Church after his ascension was the fiery evangelism of Pentecost. The chief book for the evangelist is The Acts. It is full of fire, and life, and power and it should be the background of modern evangelism. In it the modern evangelist must find his message and largely his method.

The Second Department of the Church Is the Pastoral

This department is charged with the teaching and training of all the members. Experienced and spiritual men, chosen by Jesus Christ and accepted by the church, watch over the souls that are new and young in the Church of the living God. They receive the convert from the hands of the evangelist and impart to him knowledge, awaken in him the desire to serve, and seek to restore in him the divine image.

Those who direct this department of the church

are known interchangeably as elders, bishops, and pastors. The word "elder" is of Jewish origin, "bishop" from the Greek, and "pastor" from the Latin.

Special care should be taken in selecting the elders. They should not be chosen as we choose officials of a worldly society, by the largest vote, but called only after deep prayer and faithful consideration of their fitness. Their qualifications are set forth in 1 Tim. 3:1-7. Their duties are given by the apostle Peter, 1 Peter 5:1-4. With such a character as that described by Paul, following such work as that set forth by Peter we have the ideal pastor and genuine pastoral work. No calling is finer than that of an elder in the Church of Jesus Christ.

Out of this department of church life—out of its influences and work—grew up Sunday schools, educational institutions, schools and colleges in general. The church is not to aim to have direct oversight of all these institutions but it sows the seed that contains them. It inspires men and women to found them. The church is the friend of enlightenment. Christianity is the friend of science. The most of the great universities were started by religious influence.

The church has directly under her guidance many millions of children. This is her tenderest, her most beautiful, her most important work.

Probably there is not and has never been a movement in the history of Christianity more important than the modern Sunday school.

The background of the work of the elders should be the Sermon on the Mount, the parables and the epistles. These contain the substance of Christ's teachings, and elders should if possible know them by heart.

The elders also preside at the Lord's Table, which is a holy duty no one should take up without clean hands and a pure heart. This puts the elders forth as guardians of the sacred rites of the church and as directors of the church's worship and prayers.

According to our custom there is a settled minister or ministers for each church or group of churches. He is usually known as the pastor. He is the regular preacher, and in his preaching he discharges the function of the evangelist at almost every service. He also performs the pastoral duties. He becomes minister of the church by popular call of the congregation, usually on recommendation of a committee. After his acceptance, he remains as long as mutually satisfactory to him and the church. He resigns or is asked to resign when a change is to be effected. This is a very poor method but it seems to be the best way yet devised. The Scripture contains no precedent for the appointment of ministers for a local church un-

less it be the action of Paul appointing elders and leaving Timothy as pastor at Ephesus, and Titus as the pastor of Crete.

The Third Department Is the Benevolent and Business

This is the work of the deacons. The word deacon means one who serves and therefore it is one of the finest works in the world. We cannot think of any who render more desirable service to the church and to humanity than its deacons. They consecrate their business judgment to the Master's enterprise and by so doing become the chief creators of the church buildings that help to give opportunity and stability to Christianity. The architectural achievements that have added so much glory and impressiveness to the Christian religion have in most modern cases been made possible by the business energy, vision and consecration of the deacons.

The deacons provide the ways and means for the pastor's support and they take the details of business management and of benevolent obligation off of his hands that he may be free to give himself to the Word of God and to prayer (Acts 6:1-4).

Many churches are suffering today for want of elders and deacons to do the work of the Church as indicated in this chapter. Too often the preacher has had to act as elder and deacon in addition to his own duty with the result that the

pastoral work, the business and the pulpit have all suffered. One man is not adequate except in point of suggestion and leadership, to the work of the complex, active modern church.

The story of the beginning of the diaconate is an interesting and instructive one. The office of deacon seems to have grown out of the effort to take care of the poor widows in the church at Jerusalem. This work has enlarged through the years until it has become the chief influence and inspiration in keeping alive kindness and helpfulness in the world. The deacon spirit, that is the service spirit, is penetrating and coloring society.

The importance of the work and purposes of the deacons may be seen in the orphanages and other benevolent and charitable institutions of the world. There are many thousands of such institutions scattered over the face of the earth which are not directly connected with the Church, but there is not one which did not directly or indirectly grow out the duty, ideals, and work of deacons as outlined in the New Testament.

The germ of what we now call social service is in the work of deacons. Viewing work of the church as being directed in the three departments —the evangelistic, the pastoral and the benevolent —we see that it is organized to take care of every want of man, body, soul and spirit. It contains a

perfect ideal for civilization and it will likely prove the outline of the final form and methods of States.

Intelligent and religious care must be taken in the selection of deacons. This is according to the first idea in the selection of the seven men, usually called the first deacons. (Acts 6:3, 4.) "Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will continue stedfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the Word."

The character requirements for deacons are of the highest kind and correspond closely to what is demanded of elders. They are set forth by Paul in 1 Tim. 3:8-12. Too often the membership makes too little of character and reputation in selecting the deacons.

When men of doubtful character, or unsavory reputation are put forth as church leaders, it weakens the influence of the church and emboldens men of the world to do wrong. It brings upon such men when selected to lead, the criticism if not the contempt of all who witness the procedure. But glorious indeed is the reward of those who, fitted by nature and grace to serve in these high offices, enter upon them not as the adornment of a career but as an opportunity to serve God and man. It is better to be a doorkeeper in the house of God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

The deacons should make special study of the incident of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37) which may be thought of as the first idea of the Christian hospital. If the schools and universities grew out of the idea of the work committed to the elders of the church the hospital is the fruit of the diaconate. Christian doctors, whether formally elected or not, are real deacons of Christianity. The miracles also, most of which were mercies as well as wonders wrought upon nature and spirit, are to be especially studied. They show how far Christ would go to relieve the suffering of the world. He puts human need above everything else. The miracles are really the background and inspiration for all kinds of good deeds, and for the wonderful works of mercy and healing in the world today. They are not only radiations of power from the throne but they are heart-beats of kindness from the Spirit.

The Board of Officers

The churches are guided in a human way by a body called "the board of officers." This is really an executive committee composed of the minister, the elders and the deacons who have been duly elected by the church assembled for the purpose.

There is a growing custom of holding an installation service in public recognition of the leadership of these officers and in order to impress the congregation and the officers with the importance and

the deeply religious character of the work upon which they are entering. Sometimes this ceremony is accompanied by fasting and laying on of hands as well as with prayer and a formal charge to faithfulness. Ordination means a great deal. It was a New Testament custom at least, and should still be practiced. It made for good order and impressed deeply those being so blessed with the church's confidence.

The board of officers meets monthly in most churches or when called together to receive and review reports of the work, to plan for needed enterprises and to consider and pray for the progress of the church. It is organized with chairman, vice-chairman and recording secretary. This board itself reports to the congregation with recommendations for future work annually. At this time election of officers for the congregation is usually held.

A well organized board divides itself into committees to which the various ministries of the church are assigned to be done. One of our most successful church boards has the following committees: Baptism, Sunday school, Communion, Evangelism, Finance, House, Library, Membership, Missions, Music, Pulpit Supply, Social Service and Ushers.

The treasurer of the church and the clerk are the officers of the congregation. The clerk keeps

its records. His duty is a very important one. A correct church roll is of value to the church and to each member. We have known court decisions to depend upon the church roll. And it is a genuine satisfaction and help, a real inspiration and distinction to have one's name on the church books. At the direction of the church, the clerk usually issues letters of dismissal and commendation to members moving or wishing to join other local churches.

"Dropping members" from the church record is a very doubtful practice. Many need reviving but few, if any, ought to be dropped. Sometimes it is necessary to remove a member but it is an extreme procedure and must be done with the spirit of discipline in the hope of having such a one made better and not as a final rejection or punishment of him. (1 Cor. 5; 2 Cor. 2:5-11.)

General Committees of the Church

The rich, varied and manifold work of such a high character that looks to the renewal of humanity and to the establishment of the kingdom of God, calls for many laborers. It requires every member of the church to be active. The church being an organism creates its own forms and methods of procedure. Being energized by the Spirit of God and seeking to accomplish such desirable spiritual and social ends, it has grown into a wonderful body whose influence reaches to the ends of the earth.

There are hints that every member of the church in early days was assigned to some special work. At any rate, something was expected of every one. As we learn from Ephesians 4:16, "For he, Christ, is the head and under him, as the entire Body is welded together and compacted by every joint with which it is supplied, the due activity of each part enables the Body to grow and build itself up in love." (Moffatt.) Every "joint" must supply something, every member be a vital part. There must be "the due activity of each part."

This is further enforced by Romans 12:4-8, where Paul says: "In our one body we have a number of members, and the members have not all the same function; so too, for all our numbers we form one body in Christ, and we are severally members one of another. Our talents differ with the grace that is given us; if the talent is that of prophecy, let us employ it in proportion to our faith; if it is practical service let us mind our service: the teacher must mind his teaching, the speaker his words of counsel; the contributor must be liberal, the superintendent must be in earnest, the sick visitor must be cheerful." (Moffatt.)

In these words there is at least the germ of the committee idea, and a place suggested for every one. A thoroughly well-organized and well-managed church would assign, or at least suggest to every one who becomes a member some specific

service he may render. As in a healthy body there seems to be use for even the slightest nerve or cell, so is it in the Church which is the body of Christ.

This would conserve and call out all the possible energy of the Church. The leakage of power would cease. As conditions are now, it is likely that no organization known suffers such leakage of power or has so many units unused as the Church of Jesus Christ. Consecrated personality is the strongest spiritual dynamic on earth. What would not be possible to a body of religious people were all its personalities consecrated, properly placed, duly awakened and completely energized by the Spirit of God? Certainly it could perform feats of faith that would astound the world.

Church Organizations Not Mere Mechanics

The Church of Christ is an organization but it is far from being merely a machine. Dynamics and mechanics are essential to each other. A real church is the social organ of the Holy Spirit. The life of God flows out through it to purify and redeem the world. This makes even organization spiritual. It brings people together with one purpose and heart and that cultivates in them the spiritual life. Church members must agree; they must work together; they must love one another or organization is an impossibility. It comes to pass therefore that the Church is organized love and that good organization is one of the most important essentials of spirituality.

EARLY CHURCHES WORKED TOGETHER.

Each church complete in itself.
No church has arbitrary authority over any other church.
But no church has power of itself to cope with the world.
Churches of the apostolic days considered their tasks one.
Though far apart, with modes of travel utterly primitive and poor, they found a way to work together.
A church is not apostolic, is not a New Testament church unless it is co-operative.

HOW THEY ESTABLISHED UNITY AND UNDERSTANDING.

Through traveling evangelists and Christians. Acts 9:32; Acts 15:35-41; Acts 18:24-28.
By deputations. Acts 11:19-24; Acts 15:22.
By apostolic letters. Acts 15:23-39; 1 Cor. 7:1; 2 Cor. 7:8; Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27; 2 Thess. 2:2, 15; 3: 14, 17; 2 Peter 3:1.
By church letters, possibly special letters of commendation. Rom. 16:1; 2 Cor. 3:1; Acts 18:27; 1 Cor. 16:3.
By special messengers. 1 Cor. 16:3; 2 Cor. 8:16-24; Eph. 6:21, 22; Phil. 4:18; 2 Timothy 4:12; Titus 3:12, 13.
By conference. Acts 15:1-33.
In these Scriptures we find the germ idea of church letters, the religious press conferences, delegates and conventions.

FORCES THAT MAKE CO-OPERATION.

Conventions. First Convention of Disciples, 1834. Delegate convention.
Societies organized for special purposes.
Papers and a common literature.
Conferences for discussion of problems and work.
Taking the New Testament as the only rule of faith and practice.
Having the spirit of Jesus Christ.
Doing everything in word and deed to the glory of God.
Launching forth in the active life to do the work Jesus has given his church to do.

CHAPTER XIII

HOW THE CHURCHES WORK TOGETHER

ST. PAUL'S description of the Corinthian Church was "workers together with God." This is the theme of this chapter. Without co-operation there can be no brotherhood, either in organization or in feeling, and there is no other way to make a permanent and effective impression upon the country or the world. Isolation means feebleness, narrow vision and sectarianism.

Conditions of Co-operation

Co-operation can only be realized through some kind of representative popular central organization which will afford opportunity to all members to help determine the work, objects and methods of the body. The unifying forces are many but none of them can be entirely satisfactory in creating the sentiments of brotherhood or in carrying on the work of brotherhood unless the members meet face to face and talk and pray and vote together.

It is well to consider the principles to be observed in forming and conducting organizations, through which the churches of Christ may co-operate.

1. Such organizations must not be self-determining. They are not like worldly conventions which

get together and make platforms for the people. They are not overhead, authoritative bodies. They are not super-churches. They are creations of the local churches and subject to their control. The democracy and supremacy of the "local church" must never be surrendered or impaired.

2. The convention and the missionary society are in no sense invested with governing power over the churches. They can not "hand down" to the churches. They must receive from them. Their utterances are advisory. But they should receive due consideration and sincere treatment, otherwise there can be no co-operation.

3. Conventions must not undertake to legislate as to the doctrine or faith of the Church. That is settled for all time and for all disciples by the New Testament.

4. The organizations and conventions through which the churches co-operate must be efficient. Their work must be conducted without waste and faithfully as to the intent and plans of the churches.

5. Co-operative organizations should be kept close to the people and as free from technicality as possible. This cannot be done entirely, for foreign missionary work especially requires a degree of technical training and understanding.

Co-operative Agencies of the Disciples

The churches have conventions and organized societies through which they co-operate. An im-

portant distinction should be noticed here. There is a difference between the conventions and the missionary societies. The former have no corporate legal existence while the latter are chartered and have legal standing and responsibility.

1. The chief organization of the Disciples is the International Convention of Disciples of Christ. It gathers and dissolves each year but it is the great popular body in which every Disciple may have voice and its leadership is generally trusted. *Its power lies exactly in the fact that it is not an authority but an influence.* Not being technically nor legally corporate it is more quickly responsive to the demands of the churches and it is therefore the greatest instrument of freedom and of progress the churches have at their command.

From the constitution, as adopted at the Kansas City Convention in 1917, the following sections are given, showing the purposes of the International Convention of Disciples of Christ and the organization by which it operates for the accomplishment of these purposes.

The object of this Convention shall be to promote cooperation, economy and efficiency among the various general agencies of the brotherhood; to afford facilities for auditing their accounts; to obtain a substantial representation of the membership of Churches of Christ in an annual assembly which shall consider all reports submitted to it and be advisory to our missionary, educational and philanthropic interests; and in all legitimate

ways to promote a closer fellowship in the Kingdom of God.

The Annual Assembly shall be composed of all members of Churches of Christ who shall attend and enroll, whether appointed by congregations or representing themselves only. All members of Churches of Christ shall be entitled to admission to all public sessions of the Convention.

The officers shall be a president, three vice-presidents, a recording secretary, a general secretary, and a treasurer, whose duties shall be those usually appertaining to such offices, including the sole official charge of all public sessions of the Convention. No officer save the general secretary shall be elected to succeed himself.

Between annual meetings the management shall be vested in an executive committee of fifteen members, the terms of five of whom shall expire each year. Through sub-committes or otherwise, it shall be the duty of the executive committee to act in an auditing and advisory capacity with the various missionary, educational and benevolent boards, and to co-operate with such boards in preparing the programs and all arrangements for the holding of the next annual assembly, and in presenting thereto, for approval and recommendation to the churches, a proposed missionary, educational and benevolent estimate and apportionment for the succeeding year and a proposed time and place for holding the ensuing annual assembly.

Throughout the annual assembly there shall sit from day to day, with power to appoint sub-committees, a committee on recommendations, which shall receive such reports of the various general agencies as may be submitted to it; shall analyze and scrutinize such reports; shall make such recommendations to said boards as it deems wise; and shall submit the same to the Convention.

To such committee all resolutions and other business shall be referred without debate. It shall report at each daily business session of the Convention; and each item of business so reported shall be approved or disapproved, or recommended to it by the Convention to be revised and again reported. The committee on recommendations shall be annually constituted of members of Churches of Christ who shall possess good business qualifications and be actively interested in the various agencies of the brotherhood, but not in their employ. It shall be composed of those chosen by the several State or Provincial Missionary Societies or Conventions, or by District Societies or Conventions where one or more States or Provinces may be affiliated in such District organizations, as follows:

(a) One member for each State, Province or District regardless of the number of members of Churches of Christ within such territory.

(b) One additional, and preferably lay member, for each twenty-five thousand or final major fraction thereof of church membership above the first thirteen thousand within such territory.

The members of the executive committee shall also be ex-officio members of the committee on recommendations, which may fill vacancies in its own membership.

On its application being presented to the Convention and the same being favorably reported by the committee on recommendations and approved by a two-thirds vote of the Convention, any general brotherhood missionary, educational or philanthropic organization may become a co-operating organization under the provisions of the Constitution, provided it will agree to insert in its Constitution and By-Laws a provision to submit its reports to the Convention, and to hold its books, accounts and all its records open to the inspection of the committee on rec-

ommendations or to the Executive Committee of the Convention between annual meetings of the Convention whenever such inspection is desired either by the Convention or by either of these Committees. The Convention will in every way within its power under its Constitution aid in promoting the work of its co-operating organizations. Co-operation between the Convention and a co-operating organization may be terminated at the expiration of one year after written notice of a desire to terminate such co-operation shall have been given by one or the other.

There is a fine blending of democracy and efficiency in the Convention organization. Provision is made in its Constitution for those churches which wish to select and send delegates to do so, while at the same time provision is made for participation in the Convention of those who attend without having been sent by their local churches. In the business sessions of the Convention there is the utmost freedom of discussion, while at the same time the Constitution requires that all resolutions, reports and other matters of business must be presented to the committee on recommendations and acted on by it before it can be voted on by the Convention itself. This blending of democracy and efficiency is in keeping with the entire history of the Disciples of Christ and is also in harmony with the principles of the New Testament.

Practically all the States in the Union also have annual conventions to which delegates are sent to discuss and advise on the church's aims and needs. Some States are divided into districts with officers

and conventions. There is no doubt that the country would be very thoroughly covered by preaching and teaching if the churches held themselves strictly to co-operation through these organizations as planned.

2. The United Christian Missionary Society is the legal, corporate body through which most of the churches co-operate in their general missionary, and philanthropic work. This organization, as its name indicates, is the resultant of the union of several different missionary societies which operated independently in the past. These were the American Christian Missionary Society, the Foreign Christian Missionary Society, the Christian Woman's Board of Missions, the National Benevolent Association, the Board of Ministerial Relief and the Board of Church Extension. Sunday school and Christian Endeavor interests are included in the work of the United Christian Missionary Society as they were formerly under the American Christian Missionary Society.

Owing to legal technicalities each of the old societies is kept intact. Property has been acquired by bequest and otherwise and this must be conserved according to the terms of gift and acceptance. This has been carefully and conscientiously done but the old boards do little beyond handling these perpetual funds. In its corporate capacity the United Christian Missionary Society is entirely

independent of the International Convention of Disciples of Christ, though according to its constitution it may meet annually as a part of that body. It reports to the International Convention and receives advice from it.

Its work has been distributed into departments as follows: Foreign Missions, Home Missions, Benevolence, Church Erection, Ministry, Religious Education, Missionary Education, Promotion and Service. Each department has a chairman and staff and conducts its own work, but co-ordinates it with all the others through a cabinet and by monthly reports to the executive committee.

The Society has missionaries in India, China, Africa, Tibet, Japan, South America, Mexico, Porto Rico, Jamaica and in the Philippines. The officers of the Foreign Department select the foreign missionaries and recommend them to the executive committee which gives them their commissions. The College of Missions, a school for graduate work and the training of missionaries located at Indianapolis, Ind., has hitherto been assigned to this department but hereafter will be managed by its own board of trustees. This school is highly esteemed by the Disciples and has attracted favorable attention from other religious bodies.

The Department of Home Missions supports

pastors and teachers and Sunday school superintendents as needed for missions, according to its ability. The Bible chairs at the State Universities of Michigan, Kansas, Texas and Virginia, which were under this department have been transferred to the department of Religious Education. The department conducts schools at Hazel Green and Morehead, Kentucky, and at Livingston, Tennessee. It maintains Christian work among European, Mexican and Oriental immigrants, as well as among the North American Indians, and the Negroes. The forms of work are pastoral, educational, and social, with the great objective of Christianization.

The Department of Benevolence conducts a hospital at Valparaiso, Ind., and has homes for orphans, half-orphans, and other needy children at St. Louis, Cleveland, Dallas, Atlanta, Denver and Omaha, taking care of a total of more than 500 children annually. Homes for the aged are located at Jacksonville, Florida; Jacksonville, Illinois; Walla Walla, Washington; Long Beach, California; Dallas, Texas; and Marion, Indiana.

The Department of Church Erection has assisted in building 2,182 congregations and made loans totaling more than $5,000,000 during 35 years of operation.

The Department of the Ministry continues the work of the Board of Ministerial Relief. It aids

ministers and the wives of deceased ministers and missionaries when disabled by age or affliction. It has devised a pension system in which a large number of ministers and missionaries have enrolled. A survey has been completed and is being studied by a large commission with a view to putting our entire active ministry upon a competent pension basis. But its resources are still dependent in a large measure on free-will offerings of the churches.

The Department of Religious Education has set itself the task of making "the Bible an open book among the people. It promotes the nurture and training of children, youths and adults in Christian knowledge and life." The *agencies* of its service are the Bible school and the Christian Endeavor Society, Bible Chairs, student-pastors at Universities, young people's conferences. It holds institutes, rallies and schools of methods in various parts of the country. About 30 specially trained men and women are employed in this branch of the service.

The Department of Missionary Education seeks to promote missionary study and training in all the churches and their auxiliary organizations. Promotion and Service have to do with methods and need not here be analyzed.

The news and educational organs of the Society

are *World Call, The United Society News* and the *King's Builders.*

The growth and influence of the United Christian Missionary Society have been unusual. The churches have called men and women distinguished for ability, consecration and service to direct it and they have managed the work in such a satisfactory way that already nearly three millions of dollars are being given annually to be spent by the Society for the ends and programs adopted by them at their annual meetings. There has been a perpetual and rapid increase in funds and in volunteers for the mission fields. The organization is not cast iron, but is mobile and adaptable, and as funds increase more fields will be occupied and every challenge of our volatile and changeful civilization will be wisely dealt with under the leadership of this great missionary organization.

The officers of the society are a president, two vice-presidents, a recorder, a treasurer, and a number of secretaries varying according to the demands of the work. These officers are elected annually by the society at its sessions which are held in connection with the International Convention of Disciples of Christ.

The society is under the direction of a board of managers, composed of sixty men and sixty women, one-third of whom are elected annually on the nomination of a committee selected by all the

state, provincial and regional conventions in the United States and Canada. An executive committee selected annually by the board of managers out of its own membership, consisting of ten men and ten women, meets monthly to act on all matters relating to the Society's administration. This committee reports to the board of managers, which reports annually to the Convention.

The officers of the Society are not members of the board of managers and have no vote in its sessions nor in the meetings of the executive committee.

Most of the states and provinces of Canada have incorporated missionary societies which are, generally speaking, the same in character, aim and method as those of the Home Missions Department of the United Christian Missionary Society. Most of them antedate this society. The relation between the United Christian Missionary Society and the State societies is voluntary on the part of all, but there is generally hearty co-operation.

3. The Board of Education of the Disciples of Christ is the agency through which the churches work co-operatively for their educational interests. Its headquarters are in Indianapolis. The work of the board is guided by 60 directors. The presidents of the affiliated colleges are ex-officio members of the directorate. The remaining directors are chosen from the churches at large. The Board of

Education has five departments of work with a secretary at the head of each. The departments are: General; Promotional; State University; Vocational Guidance; and Endowments. All the colleges co-operating through this board must be under the auspices of the Disciples of Christ. Each must be governed by its own board of trustees, and must not be under the immediate control of a missionary society. Its books must be audited separately and reports made annually to the churches. This is usually done at the International Convention of Disciples of Christ. At present twenty-six institutions of higher learning hold membership on this board.

The board was organized in 1914, yet in the short time that has elapsed since, it has aroused a new enthusiasm for education among the Disciples. Largely by its influence and suggestions the colleges have been put on better financial basis, the standard of scholarship raised, and the institutions have gained more confidence and attention from the Brotherhood at large. It is rapidly recovering some of our lost educational ideals and giving our colleges better standing all around. Not the least of its services is the promotion of co-operation among the colleges themselves.

4. The Disciples have always championed every kind of reform that would improve society and hence they have been among the most active

workers in the cause of temperance and related issues. They approve this work through the Board of Temperance and Social Welfare whose headquarters are in Indianapolis, Indiana. This is strictly a board and its duties are defined in its name. It reports to the International Convention and its officers are nominated and approved in the convention.

5. Desiring to emphasize anew and in a more tangible and practical way the plea for Christian Union, which was the original aim of the Disciples, delegates of the Convention at Topeka, Kansas, in 1910, took action which resulted in the setting up of the Association for the Promotion of Christian Unity.

The main purposes of the Association for the Promotion of Christian Unity are to write and distribute literature on Christian Union among the Disciples and other religious bodies, to foster prayer for unity and to hold Christian union conferences in important centers. It is incorporated and has twenty-five directors. Its headquarters are in Baltimore. It reports annually to the International Convention of Disciples of Christ and its officers and directors are elected by that body. It established *The Christian Union Quarterly* which has since received an endowment and become an independent publication.

6. There are 28 colleges in the Brotherhood. Not

all of these are standard senior colleges. Some of them are junior colleges and some are schools of religion founded at State university centers. The colleges are not under complete or direct control of the churches, yet they are considered schools of the Disciples and are patronized as such. In a few instances the conventions of the States in which they exist elect some of the trustees of the schools. A few are individual enterprises, but in line with the doctrines commonly taught by the churches. Most of these colleges co-operate with each other in the interest of their own betterment through the Board of Education. Some do not, however, preferring to remain entirely independent and to make their contribution to the Brotherhood by that method.

The Disciples are a free people and every one may work as he wishes and no one will try to hinder. But the constraint of wisdom is being felt more each year and it is becoming apparent that only by formal and expressed co-operation can churches and schools do their best work. On this there should be no divisions. Those churches which co-operate will find themselves able to go into all the world; while those which prefer not to co-operate will always have a local character and influence but will have their own special value in the kingdom of God.

7. Without the printing press and religious

newspapers, co-operative work on any large or satisfactory scale would be impossible. The agencies which build a brotherhood are the local church, the printing press, the college and the missionary society. Not the least of these is the printing press.

There are two large publishing houses connected with the general life of the Disciples of Christ. These are the Christian Board of Publication and the Standard Publishing Company.

The Christian Board of Publication, St. Louis, Mo., is the property of the Brotherhood. Its board of trustees, like those of most of our colleges, is a self-perpetuating body. Its charter binds the Board to conduct its affairs in the interest of the Disciples of Christ. Literature is issued for all the grades of the most thoroughly organized Sunday school. These publications have been kept abreast the best methods of work and the highest ideals of religious education. Papers suitable for all ages from the little child to the adult come from the presses of the Christian Board of Publication. The house also publishes *The Christian-Evangelist* which is a general religious, family and church paper. The range of literature issued includes general books, as well as those pertaining especially to the Church, but it specializes in religious books, tracts and church supplies as part of its service to the Brotherhood.

The Christian Board of Publication was the gift

of Mr. R. A. Long to the Disciples in memory of his mother. It has developed very rapidly. It owns a valuable property in the business section of the city of St. Louis. The assets at this time (1926) exceed $600,000. Dividends of nearly $50,000 have been paid to our missionary organizations. All the earnings of this board must be spent for church purposes. No private party draws any of its dividends. The trustees serve without financial compensation. The Board is fully co-operative with the United Christian Missionary Society, all the State Societies, the Board of Education, and encourages every movement that tends to establish good will and draw the churches together in co-operation.

The Standard Publishing Company, Cincinnati, Ohio, is also a house of the Disciples. It publishes much literature and many books for the Disciples of Christ and for other groups. Many Sunday school papers, lesson quarterlies and other church helps issue from its presses. It publishes a series of Sunday school papers for the same classes of readers as those served by the literature of the Christian Board of Publication. Their chief publication is the *Christian Standard,* a weekly religious journal. The company is owned and managed privately.

In addition to these journals there are a number of very able weeklies and monthlies pub-

lished by state organizations and about thirty informing and attractive parish papers by local churches.

It is fitting that special mention be made of our publishing houses and journalism. The six institutions that have built the brotherhood are the home, the local congregation, the college, the missionary society, the convention, and the publishing house; and the last mentioned has been by no means the least, either in time or importance. Both Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone published papers to promulgate their ideas. Mr. Campbell published first the *Christian Baptist,* and then *The Millennial Harbinger.* Mr. Stone's paper was *The Christian Messenger.* In addition to his journal, Mr. Campbell conducted a publishing house. These were individual enterprises, and great ones, but they went out of existence practically when the two great men passed on.

These journals were followed by others which came to meet crises. The work is more permanent and steadier now, and thus it needs a stable journalism with long prophetic forecast. No people can exist without interpretive literature because without it there can not be mutual understanding, progress of thought, elimination of mistakes, and initiation of the new monuments and crusades that become essential from time to time. Without them it would be impossible to

have such conventions as we hold today, or to maintain the solidarity essential to the life of a brotherhood.

It has been very difficult to maintain the press owing to the labor and cost of production, consequently the "death rate" in the field of journalism has been very high. There have always been self-sacrificing individuals of idealism and pluck who have borne the brunt alone and have published their papers at immense "cost of blood and treasure." In many instances far-seeing business men have come to their rescue and have given money for financing their journals. This has kept the flame of journalism alive, and the churches and other Christian institutions as well.

The largest gift for this purpose among the Disciples or, we believe, among any people, was that of Mr. Long already mentioned. He is the pioneer of endowed journalism in this country.

It requires high spiritual development and the constant exercise of faith in one another to maintain satisfactory co-operation. The Disciples are learning this divine art certainly but not without a good deal of discussion and rivalry. But it must ever be kept in mind that the motive power is the Holy Spirit, the leader Jesus Christ, the guide the New Testament, and the goal the service of God and man, otherwise organization will do more harm than good.

NO DENOMINATIONS IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

Hence must fall back on principles rather than commands and examples in order to find how the different religious groups may work together today.

Incipient denominationalism was in apostolic churches.

It is likely the early churches were never free from schism, heresy, and contention.

Note groups in church at Corinth, some claiming to be of Paul, others of apostles, and still others of Christ.

PAUL'S DIRECTION FOR OVERCOMING THIS STATE.

Honor the name and authority of Jesus Christ.
Think and speak the same thing.
Determine to have the same mind.

THE POSITION OF DISCIPLES.

Unity, which is Christian love.
Co-operation, which is working together.
Union, which is Christian organization.

THE METHODS OF PROMOTING CO-OPERATION.

First, find a common denominator of thought and esteem.
Second, find a big cause, common to all the churches.

Many such causes today, such as:

(a) Overcoming lawlessness.
(b) The Prohibition cause.
(c) Law and order movements.
(d) Sunday school work.
(e) Community chest.
(f) Charity work.

Third, through organizations outside of but still under control of churches.

The principles set forth in the Scriptures: Matt. 23: 8-12; Mark 9: 38-50; Luke 9:49-56; John 17; Acts 10:44-48; Romans 14:1-23; 15:1-7; 1 Cor. 1:10-17; Gal. 2:1-10; Eph. 4:1-6; 1 John 1:1-10.

WHERE TO DRAW THE LINE.

Against non-Christian. Heb. 13:10.
Against denial of Christ. 1 John 4:1-6.
Against the liberalist, who tries to supersede Christ. 2 John 9-11.
Against the factionist.
Against teachers of strange and false doctrines.

CHAPTER XIV

HOW THE CHURCHES WORK WITH OTHERS

IT has been asked, "If Not a United Church—What?"* The question is pertinent but should be amended to read, "Until a United Church—What?" The answer is "co-operation." *In fact, we may regard co-operation as Christian union in action—or Christian union in the practical affairs of the Kingdom.* It is the saving grace in the present state of division and confusion that we can work together in many, yea, in most of the important movements of the times. Co-operation will, we believe, eventually lead into Christian union.

Need for Christian Co-operation Urgent

1. The churches are always in imminent danger of the disgrace of strife and failure so long as Christendom is divided. Christ prayed for Christian unity, Paul argued for it, the world's needs require it and the hearts of Christian people are hungering for it.

2. Christian co-operation is demanded by the hugeness of the challenge hurled at the Church today by the wrecked condition of civilization and by the master evils that prey upon mankind. No

*Peter Ainslie.

single group of churchmen is able to cope with the drug evil, with the "White Slave Traffic," with the materialistic aims and atheistic purposes of evil men and women in different parts of the world, with the paganism of modern society, the anarchism seeking the disintegration of civilization from within, and much less with the vast masses of the nations of the world, that have as yet been scarcely touched by the influence of the gospel. *There are many theological differences between the churches but only a few ethical and religious ones.* Churches do not differ in their desire to see the world filled with good works and nothing should hinder their hearty co-operation toward that end.

3. The enemies of Christ and Christianity are foes of all the churches and there is no way to meet them except with solid front. During the World War the great nations formed an alliance in order to fight the common enemy. Each nation kept its individuality and sovereignty within its own control. But they found a way of co-operation. The representatives of all the allied countries worked together, whether generals, or physicians, or nurses, or public teachers, to make democracy safe for the world. The churches are engaged in a larger conflict than that of the World War. Their battle field is flung over wider areas, it is age-long in duration and the issues of it are more momentous than we can imagine. This ar-

gues again that we must be workers together with God.

4. Wherever there is a seam of division in the Church there is leakage of power. It costs more in money, it requires more men and more effort to work separately than to work together.

5. The Master himself recognized the principle of the oneness of his Church when he said, "Other sheep have I which are not of this fold; these also must I bring that there may be one shepherd and one fold." Christ has a people in all the churches. Well for them if they find one another and join hands in good works and become one in vision and in heart.

6. The churches will enrich their lives by co-operative endeavor. Each will get the best that inheres in all and will be compelled by the selective processes of actual experiences to throw off faults, overcome weaknesses and to put forward their best in the battle with evil. Churches, like individuals, are perfected by fellowship. (See Chapter II.)

Principles of Co-Operation

1. These principles are to be found in written form in the New Testament. They are precepts, teachings, and precedents which show what is good, and what will contribute to the growth and establishment of the kingdom of God in the world. It is self-evident that we may and should co-operate

with all Christ's followers in doing what the New Testament teaches as good works.

2. Co-operative enterprises must not require us to ignore our consciences or bear false witness to the beliefs or purposes of our own church. It must not imply the suppression of anything elemental in loyalty to Christ.

A minister was asked to attend a meeting and open with prayer. It was hinted to him that the gathering would be one of mixed beliefs—and that some would take it better if he did not use the name of Christ. Rightly the minister refused to adopt such a course. He honored both the assembly and himself by such a refusal. But if no touch of restraint had been placed upon his lips he could have gone and offered the prayer without hurtful compromise. *A very good rule in the question of co-operation is to refuse to join hands with any cause that requires the suppression, the avoidance of, or apology for the use of the Name of Jesus.*

3. *When Christian co-operation* is to be practiced, all the groups joining should really be churches. Spiritualist groups, theosophical societies, new thought associations, and clubs and lodges have no right to call themselves churches. We say this without the spirit of unkind criticism, for we gladly recognize the fact that most of these orders do much good. But merely doing good does

not make a Church nor do many such societies combined constitute a Church group.

"Church" is strictly a Christian term. Rightly it belongs only to those who openly crown Christ as Lord and practice his words as the inspiration and rule of life. The Church is a community of free individuals joined by their own unconstrained choice and deed in following Jesus Christ according to his teachings and revelation. Lodges, cults, labor organizations and ethical societies are not churches though they may be friends of the Church. If the churches join in movement with these groups *which they ought to do whenever possible,* it should be because they are honored fellowmen who are striving to serve humanity and thus are helping to make the world better and not because they are churches. It is always right to do good.

4. The spirit of Christ is to be obeyed. We should make our work and our affiliations as wide as the will of Christ. What his will about our relationship to others is can be found in his recorded words. He did not manage his charity and the wideness of his love so that it would seem to endorse those who were walking in selfish ways. He told the woman of Samaria plainly that she and her people were in the wrong in their contentions about the place of worship. Yet he talked with her, had the wonderful and great fellowship of the

cup of cold water with her, and she became enthusiastic about his person, his office and his power.

Causes in Which the Churches May Co-operate

Those who possess the spirit of Christ will have their minds clarified and their hearts delivered from sectarianism and they will be able to join in all kinds of good works with other church people.

1. There is a very wide range of movements for Christian co-operation. They include local crusades for community betterment; nation-wide campaigns for the uplift of the people; local and world "drives" for the relief of sufferers from accident, drought, oppression or persecution; efforts to Christianize industry; enterprises for better schools and better homes; and endeavors to enforce laws in the community and in the nation at large. The establishment of permanent world-wide peace is the greatest cause of all and probably includes all the rest. A Church which holds back from fighting in the war against war is the most faithless slacker in the world today.

2. There must also be hearty co-operation in general evangelistic and religious missions in which all the churches combine under the leadership of ministers suitable by consecration and ability to make the gospel appeal to sinners and present the gospel teaching to saints. This enables the Christians of a given area to mobilize their whole moral and spiritual influence for the conversion of a sin-

ning and sinful world and for the edification of the people in truth and righteousness. Such movements enable each group to do its own work better in the end. They give the Church an influence and standing in the community it could get in no other way and put the whole Christian dynamic into each organization.

Organizations Through Which Churches May Co-operate

These organizations, for the most part, arose out of Christian experience and out of the effort to find a way to help the churches work together in the name of Jesus Christ. They may be classed as *extra-church, intra-church and inter-church.* They all grew out of Christian influence and exist by the spiritual life it generates; but only the *intra-church* and *inter-church* societies consult churches as such in their work. They are all, however, allies of the Church.

1. Consider Extra-Church Organizations

Among these we think first of the Young Men's and the Young Women's Christian Associations. These are not directly under the control of the churches, but usually they are composed of church members. They are Christian associations as their name indicates. They give very much attention to the surroundings and moral welfare of the young men and women in the cities. Often they

help them to get a start in business. One of the deepest motives in them may be read in a saying of Sir George Williams, the founder. He said that "the first twenty-four hours of a young man's life in London usually settled his eternity in heaven or hell."

One of the noblest and best of the *extra-church organizations* is the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. It may be regarded as the romance of reform by Christian women. It stands for personal purity in men and women and was practically the pioneer in securing systematic and competent scientific instruction in the public schools, showing the evil effects of narcotics on the human system. It has also pleaded for the same standard of life for men and women and for clean men in office and all places of public leadership. It stands for a spiritual society. No badge is more honorable and none more honored than the White Ribbon. The organization is still greatly needed. It stands for the right kind of women's rights. It must help to interpret the new freedom of women and save them from ruin by ultra-feminist views.

Under the same head we should name the Gideons, the Pocket Testament League and the American Bible Society. The aim of all of these is to promote the reading of God's word.

The Anti-Saloon League is also an extra-church

organization, though it has been a most effective channel through which the churches have co-operated for the destruction of the liquor traffic. Largely through the agency of it the churches put their high social and moral principles into the constitution of the United States in the form of the 18th Amendment.

The Red Cross was started by a churchman but we are not aware that it ever claimed to be religious —certainly it is not ecclesiastical. Its work is humane and its objects Christian. They were put into the human heart by the sacrificial glow of the cross. The Red Cross does the work of the Master without acknowledging his name.

2. Intra-Church Organizations

The Sunday school movement is to be classed as *intra-church*. Its programs and conventions are co-operative. The local schools themselves are not component parts of the Sunday school organization. A central committee representing all the churches makes the programs of study and arranges the lessons to be studied. The courses are now planned by the ablest Sunday school leaders and Bible students in the land. Skilled educators whose hearts have been touched by God, come together to work out curricula for the Bible schools. The lessons are carefully graded and avoid the mere lecture and essay method by putting the student to the study of the Bible itself. A teacher

training course has been prepared and in nearly every city there is a central school of methods, which is worthy as a scheme of co-operation and practical Christian unity.

The Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor is *intra-church*. It commands some 4,000,000 of people but they are distributed through various churches in local societies. The churches as such have no voice in the management of this society. Possibly no movement in the annals of Christianity has had a better influence over young people. It should be noted that nearly all the great moral reforms in government and life in recent years coincide with the time when those who had been trained from childhood in the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor became old enough to work and to vote as citizens of the State. This society has mitigated sectarian animosities and put a very much needed element of brightness and joy into religion.

There is a distinctive Christian Endeavor culture and it is of the most winsome kind. Christian Endeavor conventions have been amongst the largest gatherings of modern times and have stimulated all the churches to better work and better living. These conventions have contributed much to the unity of the nation and to the breaking down of racial prejudices. The Young People's Senior Endeavor has been a training school in visions

and tasks. The pledge presents one of the finest programs of the personal religious life known to us. It is worthy of special study and is as follows:

Trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for Strength

I promise Him that I will strive to do whatever He would like to have me do; that I will make it the rule of my life to pray and to read the Bible every day, and to support my own church in every way, especially by attending all her regular Sunday and mid-week services, unless prevented by some reason which I can conscientiously give to my Savior and that just so far as I know how, throughout my whole life, I will endeavor to lead a Christian life.

As an Active Member

I promise to be true to all my duties, to be present at and to take some part, aside from singing, in every Christian Endeavor prayer meeting, unless hindered by some reason which I can conscientiously give to my Lord and Master. If obliged to be absent from the monthly consecration meeting of the society, I will, if possible, send at least a verse of Scripture to be read in response to my name at the roll call.

3. Inter-Church Organizations

The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America is an inter-church organization. This is the most effective medium of co-operation yet devised between the churches of the different religious groups. It is to be carefully distinguished from what is known in certain parts of the United States, especially in the central west and the northwest as "federated churches" in which the different churches of a given community abandon their own organizations and their own environing group, and merge into one organization, yet strive to

hold fast to their peculiar doctrinal views. A fair trial of such movements has shown that they really cease to function and that the spiritual aspects of and efforts for the conversion of the world are generally abandoned for "social service." *The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America is not a church at all. It is not even an organization of churches.* It is an inter-church organization supported by 32 religious bodies in the United States. The idea of it was wrought out in a conference held in Carnegie Hall in 1905. The national assemblies of Churches participating in it adopted the suggested organization 1906-1908, and it was ratified by the Council at its meeting in Philadelphia, December 2-8, 1908. A thorough understanding of it may be gathered from the constitution, which is in full as follows:

Preamble

Whereas, In the providence of God, the time has come when it seems fitting more fully to manifest the essential oneness of the Christian Churches of America in Jesus Christ as their Divine Lord and Saviour, and to promote the spirit of fellowship, service, and co-operation among them, the delegates to the Interchurch Conference on Federation, assembled in New York City, do hereby recommend the following Plan of Federation for their approval:

Plan of Federation

For the prosecution of work that can be better done in union than in separation a Council is hereby estab-

lished whose name shall be the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.

The object of this Federal Council shall be:

I. To express the fellowship and catholic unity of the Christian Church.

II. To bring the Christian bodies of America into united service for Christ and the world.

III. To encourage devotional fellowship and mutual counsel concerning the spiritual life and religious activities of the churches.

IV. To secure a larger combined influence for the Churches of Christ in all matters affecting the moral and social condition of the people, so as to promote the application of the law of Christ in every relation of human life.

V. To assist in the organization of local branches of the Federal Council to promote its aims in their communities.

This Federal Council shall have no authority over the constituent bodies adhering to it; but its province shall be limited to the expression of its counsel and the recommending of a course of action in matters of common interest to the churches, local councils, and individual Christians.

It has no authority to draw up a common creed or form of government or of worship, or in any way to limit the full autonomy of the Christian bodies adhering to it.

The Disciples in Convention at Omaha in 1902 voted, after a stormy debate, to enter this movement, which, however, did not come into active existence until 1908, as noted above. The fears entertained by those who opposed it, that it would be a harmful alliance, have proved unfounded by

its fifteen years of service. It may be said without exaggeration that the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America has lived up to the promise of its preamble and resolution; that it has never shown any signs of becoming an ecclesiasticism; that it has dealt strictly with the interpretations and applications of essential Christianity; and that it has sought by legitimate means always to educate public opinion. By thus holding itself strictly to the idea of being only a voice it has become one of the most influential Christian organizations in the world. It has brought the Protestant influence to bear on the great questions that concern Christianity and society in this country and elsewhere, and has become a most helpful and intelligent interpreter of world questions according to the mind of Christ. High officials in our great republic and in other nations pay respect to its words, as well as do the churches and ministers of Protestantism. At present it is the only institution in the field that makes it possible for the churches to be heard by the rulers of the world. It is in essence like the idea which Thomas Campbell and others organized as "The Christian Association" of Western Pennsylvania, with the difference that it is an association of churches instead of individuals. The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America is so guarded and controlled that it is practically impos-

sible for it ever to become another separate body among the already too many separate bodies of Protestantism.

Many Extra-Church Organizations

There are many other general organizations and committees of an extra-church nature which afford leadership in movements that aim to fulfil Christ's purpose in helping to lift the world out of poverty, injustice, sorrow and sin. The great missionary societies of the various churches are working at this task and they have co-operative connection with each other in such a way that the influence of the various churches makes one general impact upon the heathen world. Besides these there are about 75 organizations which co-operate in some form of Christian service noted in "The Year Book of the Churches," by Dr. E. O. Watson. It is said that even that is not a complete list.

It may be seen incidentally that there is not nearly as much or as confusing division in the churches as is generally supposed. *Co-operation is at least a form of union.* Let us repeat, *it is Christian union in action.* Most of the churches today are eager for this kind of fellowship and they gladly lend themselves to any and all movements and organizations that will effect "team work" among the Christian peoples of a community and of the whole world.

WHAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS.

The rule of God within.
The "Realm of God"—as Moffatt translates the phrase —without.
The control of all things from above. "He that sitteth on the throne saith."
The idea truly expressed by Browning:

"God's in his heaven:
All's right with the world."
—*Pippa Passes.*

THE WAY HE BUILDS THE KINGDOM.

By saving the lost. Luke 9:10.
By regenerating men. John 3:3-16.
By giving new life. John 10:10.
By giving program of work. Matt. 6:9-15. Matt. 25: 31-46; Luke 4:14-19.
By working through men. Matt. 6:9, 10, 33; Matt. 16: 19; Matt. 28:18-20.
By preparing men to live forever. John 14:1-7.
By the power of the Cross. John 3:14, 15; John 12:32-34.
By establishing the rule of Christ in the world. Rev. 11:15.

NATURE OF THE KINGDOM.

It is the rule of love and truth. John 18:36.
Ethical and spiritual. Heb. 1:8; Romans 14:17.
Illustrated in parables. Matt. 13:1-50; 18:21-35; 20: 1-17; 22:1-14; 25:1-13; 25:14-30; Mark 4:26-32; Luke 14: 15-24; 19:11-27.

THE GIFT OF THE KINGDOM.

Luke 12:32; Luke 22:29; Eph. 5:5; Col. 1:12, 13; James 2:1-5; 2 Peter 1:11; Rev. 1:6.

CONSUMMATION OF THE KINGDOM.

Acts 1:6; Rev. 11:15; Rev., Chapters 21 and 22; 1 Cor. 15:20-28, 35-58.

CHAPTER XV

THE SUPREME PURPOSE OF JESUS CHRIST

IN order to fulfil the mission of the Church or to live in the right way our own personal lives, Christ's purposes in the world must be discovered and always kept in view. What that purpose was and is we are now to study. This is a large question and will tax our understanding, indeed our *imagination.* For one can never think beyond, can never think up to Jesus Christ.

Why Know Christ's Purpose

1. We could work without knowing but it would be discouraging and we could not work so well.

We observe this in order to be saved from the narrowing and hardening experience of living for our church only instead of striving for the all-inclusive cause, the purpose of Jesus. Christ's purpose must be known before we can give our church its true mission, direction and speed. For the existence of any religious group is meaningless—is, in fact, sinful if the mission of the Master is not made the mission of the Church. Forever we must keep in mind that the Church is *His* Church, his body—the organization through which He works in this world.

> Our wills are ours, we know not how,
> Our wills are ours to make them thine.

Our church is ours—but it is ours to make it Christ's. If it is not that it is nothing.

2. It is necessary to know the purpose of Christ in the world in order to give the Church the inspiration it needs. We have all heard of the stone-cutter whose only duty was to carve a flower or portion of a flower on a rock, he had heard was to be placed in a great building. But he had no joy in his work and considered it drudgery until he saw the completed plan—and how faithful fulfilment of his part was helping to beautify the whole magnificent structure. He became enthusiastic over his task and sang as his hammer struck fire from the rocks. So will it be with the church which gets a real vision of its own relation to Christ's mission on earth. When we see the supreme sweep and meaning of Christianity it arouses in us new joy and power. And each church comes to something because its efforts flow into the broadening streams of Christ's purpose as it lengthens and deepens and gathers momentum with the ages.

The Supreme Purpose of Christ on Earth

With these explanations, what did Jesus propose to do in the world? What is the real purpose of Christianity? What is the supreme meaning of Jesus Christ for time and eternity?

Jesus Christ gave the keynote to his ministry and his work on earth in his first preaching immediately following his baptism. His theme was the Kingdom of God, his purpose on earth to establish that kingdom. (See Matt. 4:12-17.)

He taught his disciples to pray for the coming of the Kingdom: "Thy Kingdom come" (Matt. 6:10). He explained at the beginning of his teaching by the seaside that his parables were to illustrate different phases of the Kingdom. (Matt. 13: 10, 11, 19, 24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47, 52.) In the Sermon on the Mount he told men to seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness. (Matt. 6: 33.) After he rose from the dead he had forty days of wonderful, mystical, intimate association with his disciples. It was the splendor of an indescribable morning-burst of joy and vision after a night of gloom and sorrow. How he lived and where he lived is not told; but it was a period of emphasis and revelation and the sum and climax of his work is written by Luke: "He showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the Kingdom of God." (Acts 1:3.) Still that sun-crowned mountain peak, the Kingdom of God, to lure them on!

The apostles understood that the establishment of the Kingdom was his supreme purpose on earth

and so they preached the *Lordship of Christ* as the obligation of life (Acts 2:36; 10:36).

St. Paul says in what is perhaps the highest reach of his profound and exalted teachings: "Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." (1 Cor. 15:24, 25.)

We have the word of St. John in one of the finest passages of the whole New Testament: "The Kingdom of the world is become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he shall reign forever and ever." (Rev. 11:15.) The transformation of the kingdoms of this world into the Kingdom of God will be the climax of history.

Thus the words of Matthew, Luke, Peter, Paul and John and of the Master himself show that the Master's supreme purpose in this world was to establish, or as it would be more accurate to say, regenerate and grow men and nations into the Kingdom of God.

The Ideal of the Kingdom of God

It was not to be a government after the fashion of men, which consists of an organization with visible and earthly rulers but it was "the reign of heaven," "the Realm of God." The latter is the phrase Moffatt uses in his recently translated New Testament. Paul says: "The Kingdom of God is

not meat and drink but righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Spirit."

The principles of the rule of God will bring about a new heaven and a new earth. It is to be a reality both here and hereafter. It will bring all the satisfactions possible to this earth and all the glories to be revealed in the great beyond. It is the kingdom of the beatitudes. It is the kingdom of the parables—the vital seed, the hidden treasure, the pearl of great price, the golden net, the full grown tree in whose sunny branches birds will sing forever. It is an ideal state which ever lures on and inspires its subjects; a real state that has to do with the practical things of daily life, which ever commands its subjects. The Kingdom is:

1. An inner experience. "The Kingdom of God is within you." Everyone who lets God rule in his heart is in the Kingdom because first of all the Kingdom is in him. It is the inward truth that makes him free.

2. It is a social condition. The love of God in the heart expresses itself socially. The light in a man generally finds the way out to make the world better. Men and women first experience the rule of God in their hearts and then they begin to practice it toward their fellowmen and women.

The Lord's Prayer is a passionate longing for the Kingdom and in that prayer is set forth the power, the nature, and the program of the King-

dom of God. It will be *a society in which God is reverenced,* "hallowed be Thy name"; in which *his will makes of earth a golden heaven,* "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"; in which *there is no want,* "Give us our daily bread"; it will be *a forgiven world,* "And forgive us our sins"; *a reconciled world,* "as we forgive those who sin against us"; *a safe world,* "and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil"; *a world full of God,* "For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory"; and it will be *an everlasting kingdom,* —"forever."

3. It will spread into a universal realm. It will suffuse, reform and transform political conditions and practices. "The kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ." (Rev. 11:15.) That does not necessarily mean that forms of States are to be changed but that the spirit which animates them is to be purified and enlightened and their objects are to be made righteous, spiritual, eternal. The "Kingdom of God" interpreted as the realm of God, "the rule of God" as "righteousness, joy and peace," may be expressed through any form of government.

But these governments must fear God and seek to find *his will* and not to be the organs of man's ambition and pride. A true government, one that expresses the highest purposes, that seeks the good of men, must be *the organ of God's will.* When

governments become *organs of God's will* they will be living the life of the kingdom of heaven. Instead of planning and working *to create wealth alone*—as they do now—they will think and work to make men clean, upright and happy. They will look to the character of men rather than to their possessions.

The work of the churches is to bring all men to a knowledge of God, to the acceptance of his will, and to the practice of his love; which will be to establish his Kingdom.

4. The Kingdom of God extends to nature. This is the meaning of the miracles and helps us to see where science performs its service to religion. The rejection of miracle is like saying that God made the world a machine and abandoned it as soon as he made it—that he shut himself out from its processes and its powers, that he became enmeshed in his own laws. But miracle shows the continued presence and intentions of God in his own world. His hand is still in the affairs of men and in the works of nature.

Miracles over nature revealed his mastery of matter. If nature cannot be interfered with, then science and invention are impossible. But science is simply a profound enquiry for the secret at the root of miracle.

Miracle is God's suggestion to man of the things which await him when he explores nature. And

according to Paul, "Creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the children of God." The miracles of healing are perpetual inspirations to physicians and abiding consolations to those who have sickness or deformity. The miracle is the challenge to science to search farther, to go deeper, to persevere, to believe in God and the wonders of this world.

5. The kingdom of heaven also refers to the Heavenly State into which the redeemed will enter when this present material order has finished its purpose, when the redeemed enter upon their pure spiritual existence in the Eternal World. One of the most suggestive, as well as one of the most eloquent, passages in the Bible comes in Paul's inspired argument for the resurrection of the dead. He says, 1 Cor. 15:22:

> For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; then they that are Christ's, at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death.

The great apostle seems almost to fail of words as he seeks to lead the Corinthians to a vision of "the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," as Peter's phrase is. Paul says:

> There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth

from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

Surely no other thought of man's possibility has such sweep and majesty as that of the Kingdom of God. To man belongs all worlds, here and hereafter, if he will live in subjection to Jesus Christ.

How Jesus Builds the Kingdom

The dynamic which builds the Kingdom is the gospel; the body through which it works is the Church; the standard of life to be attained is Jesus and his teachings; the guide to its practices and possibilities the New Testament; the inner interpreter and light, the Holy Spirit and the King is God the Father.

The Kingdom is a family and inheres in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Some of the steps in building the Kingdom and some of the experiences of its life may be profitably enumerated.

1. Jesus *saves his people from their sins.* (Matt. 1:21.) The chief trouble with the world lies here. It is our sins that plague us and that bring our woes. Saving people from their sins means forgiveness—but more—it means that the individual will be delivered from the *grip,* the virus, the

power, the love of, the delusions of sin. The Kingdom is made up of people who have been saved from their sins and are living the Christ life.

2. *He came to seek and to save the lost*—to restore the unfortunate and out of the way. His program of immediate work is stated in Luke 4:16-22:

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor;
He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are bruised,
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

And he closed the book and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down: and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, Today hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears. And all bare him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth: and they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

Nothing could be more beautiful than this outline of his purpose. It is to take all the world's unfortunates and ill treated, and neglected, and broken-hearted, and restore them to places of dignity, power, and worth among their fellows. He is not willing that any should perish or be trampled in the mire. He would find the diamond lost in earth's dust heaps and restore it to its place, to

flash and burn in the crown of gold about the brow of men made magnificent by his grace. He would bring back all prodigals. He would salvage the wrecks and the wrecked that strew the shores of time.

3. *Jesus gives his people life.* (John 10:10.) Religion is therefore an inner and vital experience. It has been defined as the "life of God in the soul of man." It is far deeper than obedience to rules and is made by processes more wonderful than the resolution to practice precepts, however true they may be. It means much more than to strive for ideals however high and fine. Religion is a concrete, personal, practical and practicable life. The idea is emphasized also in the third chapter of the gospel of John. Jesus there teaches that man must be born again, born from above, born of water and the spirit. Under the touch of Christ man becomes a new creature—created unto good works with the lovely image of God restored in his personality and being. Christ came to make the most out of men and women; to enrich life in everybody and this he has done and is doing. The Christian race is a new race in the world.

This new life is expressed openly in loyalty to the Master. We use the words of John Watson (Ian Maclaren) to illuminate this idea:

> Loyalty to Jesus was to be the spinal cord to the new body, and the sacraments were to be the signs of the new spirit. Each was perfect in its simplicity—a beautiful

poem. One was Baptism, where the candidate for God's kingdom disappeared into water and appeared again with another name. This meant that he had died to self and had risen a new creature, the child of the Divine Will. The other was the Lord's Supper, where Jesus' disciple eats bread and drinks wine in remembrance of His death. This meant that he had entered into the spirit of his Master and given himself to the service of his Master and given himself to the service of the world. Those are the only rites of Jesus, those His bonds, and with this lowly equipment—two pledges of sacrifice—began the kingdom of God.

4. *Jesus builds his Kingdom by giving happiness to people.* There is an idea that Christ was against happiness. We hear it said that he never laughed but that he wept. But it is said that he rejoiced. The first word of the Sermon on the Mount, which is generally understood to be a kind of inaugural address in which the heavenly ideals are set forth for practice on earth, is "blessed." That means happiness in the deepest sense with all its tones, and notes and impulses, in all its moods and tenses. The music of the heart plays full in the experience of the Christian life. All the treasures and beauties of happiness are in the religion of Christ.

5. *Jesus draws people into the Kingdom by revealing the beauty and glory of the King.* He came to reveal God. (John 17:3.) To know God is to love him and to seek communion with him. Communion with God means participation in the life of God. It is to partake of his goodness and of

his eternity. This knowledge alone tends to lift man up until he uses the whole world aright. It delivers him from the quest of those earthly things which perish with the using. We never go right unless we start right; and if God is the beginning, and the end—and we partake of his life—then we master time and circumstance and live forever.

6. *Jesus Christ increases the Kingdom by the power of the truth working through individuals who accept it.* Truth-lovers are Kingdom-builders. He said to Pilate: "To this end have I been born and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." (John 18: 37.) No one has ever been able to give a satisfactory definition of the truth because it is abstract and not easy to visualize. It is the fundamental, eternal principle and power, enlightenment and warmth in which personality is created and kept, upon which life and conduct are conditioned. It is the basis of free-will, and free-endeavor because it is the gleam that guides men out of the maze and confusions of time; it is the eternal urge which drives men on through heat and cold, up-hill and down-hill and even through the fiery red gate of martyrdom. The Master said: "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." We know Christ's Kingdom will abide forever for it is a Kingdom of truth.

Freedom is the condition of progress. It is the privilege of living one's own life in his own way as God gives it to him to see the right. It is the privilege of making one's own choices in Christ and by the light of his teachings.

This establishes the sovereignty of personality, makes it one's duty to think, to act and to speak as it seems right to him. Only in this is it possible to discover the deeper and higher things of God in the exploration of the limitless universe in which God has placed us. The only limitations of man's thought and conduct are truth and love as they are revealed in Jesus Christ.

7. It must be also that what we call material progress is somehow certainly leading to the full establishment of the Kingdom of God. All arts and inventions, every bit of knowledge and every conquest of hitherto unknown areas leads toward Him. As we learn how to live better, build better houses, to do better work, we are working toward the Kingdom of God. If we make two blades of grass grow where only one grew before; if we push back the line of darkness the slightest perceptible degree; if we learn how to fight and slay disease; if we conquer the secret of sound, the mystery of metal, the hitherto impossibility of the trackless air; if we explore the earth, the sea, and the air, we are extending the Kingdom of God, or preparing for its coming in

a larger way. This is the greatest inspiration to work and to workers. It takes the drudgery out of the plainest task and makes every day an opportunity to be a worker with God and with all earnest souls who dream of a perfect world and try to build for Eternity.

8. *Jesus Christ is establishing the Kingdom by preparing man to live forever.* He reveals to man the life immortal and gives him luring glimpses of the Great Beyond. St. Paul says that Christ manifested God's purpose toward man, and "abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." What a greatness this reveals in man's essential life and being! As the Kingdom which Christ revealed and is establishing belongs to all worlds, so the people out of whom and for whom this Kingdom ever grows, belongs to all worlds. Man is promised resurrection and eternal life. The Master said "because I live ye shall live also." St. Paul declared Christ "the first fruits of them that are asleep." (1 Cor. 15:20.) He tells us there is the Spirit working in us already with transforming power and energy. (Romans 8:11.) "Our citizenship is in heaven: whence also we wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself." (Phil. 3:20, 21.)

Christians are the subjects of a hidden and divine energy which is working out in them the miracle of immortality. As in the laboratory of nature porcelain may be made from clay, opal from soot, diamonds from coal dust and roses from earth, dew, sunlight and darkness, so in the laboratory of grace God is making out of our mortal, gross, and sometimes deformed bodies of clay, the body of the resurrection, the spiritual body of strength, beauty, adaptability and everlasting youth and duration.

Jesus has also revealed something of the nature of the eternal world. He said to his apostles when the Great Shadow which awaits us all fell athwart the circle of love and communion in the Upper Room:

> Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

That is the highest word of revelation about the destiny of man. It is crowned with the light of everlasting life. It assures the Christian an eternal association, reunion beyond the grave. It shows us the full, final, triumphant Kingdom of God. It is the revelation of heaven and it is enough. And, if we do not misread, there are distinct intimations now not only that man is to live

forever but that he will have work to do, services to render through the long and blissful forever. His life is to go on in a grander way even than in this world (Rev. 22:3, 4).

After all, here we find the supreme motive for conquering self, for living the white life and for loving one another. When the light of the eternal world was falling across the summits of the Delectable Mountains upon the face of the aged Apostle John he had glimpses of the Kingdom to which he was going and of the God whom he should see face to face and he said softly but firmly and ecstatically:

Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is. And every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself even as he is pure. (1 John 3:2, 3.) Amen.

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